

# **Helsinki's Image as a Tourism Destination in St Petersburg**

Arina Saks

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Author or authors Arina Saks	Group or year of entry TOBBA'09
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Supervisor or supervisors Evariste Habiyakare	
<p>The thesis was written in order to determine the image of Helsinki as a tourism destination in St Petersburg.</p> <p>The theoretical framework based on the definition of the concept of the image and consumer behaviour in tourism. The literature review helps to determine the destination image and its components. Woodside and Lysonski's model of destination awareness and Middleton's a stimulus-response model both lead to a better understanding of consumer behaviour concept and decision-making process.</p> <p>The survey was conducted in order to collect empirical data. The questionnaire was designed both in Russian and English language and includes 8 multiple-choise questions, 4 open-ended, and 17 statements. Surveys were given to a random selection of people in St Petersburg in public places. The electronic version of the questionnaire was sent to Russian friends residing in St Petersburg and to people in a social network. The total number of respondents, participating in the survey, is 85 people .</p> <p>The findings of this research seem to suggest that the image of Helsinki is positive among Russian tourists from St Petersburg. The majority of respondents perceived the image of Helsinki as "positive" or "excellent". However, tourists from St Petersburg think about Helsinki as a city suitable mainly for leisure and shopping.</p>	
<p>Keywords tourist destination image, quantitative research, destination image formation, Helsinki</p>	

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# **1 Introduction**

Nowadays Russian people very often travel to Finland. According to Yle.fi novosti po russki, the Finnish embassy in Russia issued a record number of visas in 2011. About 1 million applications were submitted and the millionth visa was issued in St. Petersburg. Surely, the number of people travelling to Finland will grow every year. Therefore, Russian tourists from St Petersburg already have a certain, well-established image of Helsinki and the main target of this thesis is to find it out. Then the existing image can be corrected in the future.

Having a positive destination image is every essential nowadays, because it has a strong impact on customer's decision-making process and buying behaviour. It influences tourism in general. However, building a positive destination image is also affected by the informational channels, such as social media, promotional literature, opinion of others etc. Therefore, creating a positive destination image is a very challenging job, because this image is hard to change in general.

The theoretical framework of the following thesis is focused on the destination image, the components of destination image, and consumer behaviour in tourism. In addition to these theoretical points, there are also studies of the types of tourism and destination image formation. Generally, all these were used in order to create the research questionnaire and to analyse the survey.

## **1.1 Research problem and research questions**

The main research problem is to investigate image of Helsinki as it is seen by people from St-Petersburg. In order to get the correct results, there should be the right questions. One of the most important research questions is what exactly Russian tourists from St-Petersburg think about Helsinki and what kind of impression they get from Helsinki. Another research question is what kind of image Russian tourists from St Petersburg currently have about Helsinki. It is also important to find out what kind of opinion St-Petersburg inhabitants have of Helsinki and what are the reasons for them to travel there.

It is very important to understand how Russian tourists from St Petersburg see Helsinki and what kind of thoughts they have about the capital of Finland, because they have a possibility to travel to Finland more often than other Russian people living in other cities. If Finnish government creates the right image, it will attract more Russian tourists to Helsinki. During every their visit tourists will spend money on different kinds of activities, goods, and services, therefore the income from the tourism will grow up. Surely, a positive destination image affects tourist's decision and buying behaviour.

## **1.2 Aim and objectives**

The main objective of this thesis is to find out what kind of image they have about Helsinki, because nowadays many Russian tourists travel to Finland very often, some of them travel almost every day. However, it means that these people already have a certain image of Helsinki. The primary objective of the thesis is to figure out the perceptions of Russian tourists from St Petersburg of Helsinki. Moreover, it is essential to indicate the requirement and the level of awareness of the city for people from St-Petersburg.

The following Bachelor's thesis is focused on finding out the image and opinion of Russians tourists from St-Petersburg on Helsinki as a tourist destination. There were determined factors and attributes that are the part of the destination image.

However, it will be possible to make a valuable conclusion about the real image of Helsinki and what kind of opinion Russian people have analysing the data collected from the questionnaire. Moreover, there will be provided some recommendations for further studies.

Due to research findings it will be possible to improve Helsinki's image as a tourist destination, in order to increase the attractiveness of this city. It might also affect the tourism marketing strategy regarding the Russian tourists.

### 1.3 Research approach and methods

The following Bachelor thesis is based on empirical study. The empirical research is done through a quantitative method. Qualitative research method can be described as “entailing the collection of numerical data and as exhibiting a view of the relationship between theory and research as deductive, a predilection for a natural science approach (and positivism in particular), and as having an objectivist conception of social reality” (Alan Bryman & Emma Bell, 2003, 68).

Using the quantitative data it is possible to look at the image of Helsinki in the eyes of people living in St Petersburg in general. It is very essential, as it is an easy and quick way to collect a great number of opinions about Helsinki among St Petersburg’s inhabitants. The goal of this method is to create a valuable questionnaire and then create a statistic. The questionnaire was created in two languages: English and Russian, because many people might have language difficulties answering the survey, and this way the researcher will prevent misunderstanding and avoid the erroneous data. The questionnaire was created with the help of Webropol programme. For the data analysis the SPSS programme was used, as it is widely used for analysis of statistic data.

The questionnaires were given to a random selection of Russian people in St Petersburg, who were waiting for their bus to Helsinki, people waiting their train at Finland-ski Railway station, where the high speed train Allegro was inbound. Moreover, online questionnaires were sent to Russian friends living in St Petersburg and to people in a social network who attend fan groups of Finland and Helsinki.

## **2 Helsinki as a tourist destination**

This chapter presents Helsinki as a tourist destination. It includes the latest facts and some general information about Helsinki, which will be useful for tourists and their main attractions. There is also some important information about documents and visa requirements. In addition there is some additional information about visa facilitation.

### **2.1 About Helsinki**

First of all, Helsinki is the capital of Finland; it is a unique Northern European city with over a half million inhabitants. The city is located on the Baltic Sea coast and surrounded by hundreds of small islands, which make Helsinki perfect for cruises. It is also fair to say that Helsinki is a place where Eastern and Western cultures meet. Finnish design has made Helsinki the World Design Capital in 2012 (City of Helsinki, 2011). According to British lifestyle magazine *Monocle*, Helsinki was selected as the most liveable city in the world. Helsinki is also regarded as one of the cleanest cities in Europe according to many international studies, rated high in health and sanitation (City of Helsinki, 2010).

Helsinki offers a lot of activities and events for the tourists. There are plenty of museums, galleries, and venues. The city is also rich in architecture and design. Helsinki provides different musical performances from classical to popular. The visitors have a lot of opportunities for the outdoor activities all year long (City of Helsinki, 2010) for all tastes. Everyone will find something interesting.

### **2.2 How to get to Helsinki**

Russian tourists from St Petersburg have many possibilities to get to Helsinki: by air, by train, by bus, by ferry, and by car. The choice of the transportation depends on time, money and the preferences of the traveller.

There is a good train connection between St Petersburg and Helsinki. Nowadays, it is the fastest and most convenient way to get there. According to Veturi, Allegro train



has four departures per day from Helsinki and St Petersburg. The average length of journey is 5,5 hours. Passport and customs controls are conducted aboard the moving train and the authorities start inspections just after the train's departure from St Petersburg or Helsinki. The price of the second class ticket is 84 euro, in the first class it is 133 euro.

Another way to get to Helsinki is by ferry. It is a very easy way to get to Helsinki for those people who don't have a visa. According the St Peterline website, the length of the cruise is about 40 hours. The price for the trip may vary depending on the cabin class and the day of the week. The cheapest ticket for the round-trip cruise is 112 euro, the most expensive is 468 euro from Thursday to Saturday. There are many services provided on board, such as bars and restaurants, a sauna, the cinema, kids' club etc. (St-Peterline, 2012).

However, many travellers prefer going to Helsinki by car. It is a very convenient way to travel, because individuals can modify their journey as they want, visit many places besides Helsinki and leave Helsinki at the most suitable time for them. According to Google maps, the distance between St-Petersburg and Helsinki is about 369 km and the average length of the journey is about 5-6 hours.

Travelling from St Petersburg to Helsinki by air is the fastest way to get there. Direct flights from Russia to Finland carried out by Finnair, different Russian Airlines, and RusLine. The direct flight lasts 55 minutes. The price for the ticket starts from 76 euro (Finnish.ru, 2011).

There are plenty of bus companies offering passenger service from St Petersburg to Helsinki and many other cities of Finland. Checking many web pages of these companies, the researcher found out that the average length of journey is 7-8 hours. Usually, one-way ticket costs about 20-25 euro. Buses arrive and depart every day. There is also an additional service "delivery at the certain address", which costs about 5-10 euro.

### **2.3 Enter documents and visa**

According to the website of the Embassy of Finland in St Petersburg, all citizens of Russia require a visa for the entrance to the territory of Finland and other Schengen countries. The Consulate-General of Finland in Saint Petersburg obtains visa applications only from the residents of the North-West region of Russia. It means that people living in other parts of Russia have to apply for their visa in The Embassy of Finland in Moscow or in Petrozovodsk.

In order to obtain a visa, the following documents are required:

- Visa application form;
- International passport, valid for at least 90 days;
- Insurance;
- Documents or relevant information which justified the purpose and conditions of travel.

According to Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, visa facilitation agreement has been in force from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2007 between the European Community and the Russian Federation. It means that citizens of the Nord-West region of Russia (including St-Petersburg inhabitants) have simplified rules for Finnish visa application. Thereby, tourists from St Petersburg can easily get a visa and travel to Finland more than people living in other parts of Russia.

### **2.4 Main attractions of Helsinki**

Attractions of the destination are one of the most significant components in the tourism. They play a very important role in a positive building of destination image, because they encourage people to travel to a certain city or country. The main purpose of the attractions is to stimulate the interest to the destination.

As stated by March and Woodside (2005, 230), “The kind of attractions that tourists visit is likely to reflect particular travel motivations.” It means that people with the cer-

tain preferences will attend not all attractions at the destination, but those they are interested in.

There are a lot of places of interests in Helsinki for any taste, so that everyone will find something interesting. In the following sections there will be introduced several examples of the most popular attractions in Helsinki.

### *Helsinki Cathedral*

Helsinki Cathedral is an Evangelical Lutheran cathedral, designed by the C. L. Engel. It is also called in Finnish Helsingin tuomiokirkko or Suurkirkko. The Cathedral is located in the city centre of Helsinki. The church was built in 1830–52, in neoclassical style. Nowadays, it is one of the most popular attractions in Helsinki. More than 350,000 people visit the church every year (Wikipedia, 2011).

### *The national museum of Finland*

The national museum was designed by the Finnish architects, such as Herman Gesellius, Armas Lindgren and Eliel Saarinen. The museum was opened to the public in 1916. National Museum shows Finnish history from prehistoric times to the present. The unique exhibits tell about the life for a period of over 10,000 years. The visitors can see major archaeological findings, the historical, numismatic and ethnological collections. Museum also conducts temporary exhibitions (National board of antiquities, 2012).

### *Ateneum art museum*

Ateneum Art Museum is a part of the Finnish National Gallery. It was designed by Theodor Höijer and finished in 1887. Ateneum Art Museum has the largest collections of art in Finland with more than 20,000 pieces of art from the period of the 1750s to the 1950s. Moreover, Ateneum organises various workshops, guided tours and other programme for visitors (Helsinki, 2012).

### *Helsinki Zoo*

Helsinki zoo was founded in 1889, for the moment it is the oldest zoo in the world. In Helsinki Zoo visitors can see animals from the arctic tundra to the tropical rainforest. There are approximately 200 different animal species and almost 1000 different plant species. People can also see some endangered species at the Helsinki zoo (Zoo, 2012).

### *Sibelius Park & Monument*

The monument at Sibelius Park was built to honour national composer Jean Sibelius (1865-1957) by the architect Eila Hiltunen. The Sibelius Monument looks like a cluster of steel pipes. To the date, Sibelius Park has been the venue of many special events. In addition, nowadays, Sibelius monument is one of Helsinki's landmarks (Eila Hiltunen, 2002).

### 3 Theoretical framework

This chapter can be divided into five parts. The first part of the theoretical framework discusses types of tourism and explains the purpose for travelling for each one. The second part deals with the tourism destination image and its perception by individuals. It is a very essential part of the research, because the image has a great influence on tourist behaviour and decision-making. In part three there was discussed the process of destination image formation, which has a crucial influence on the traveller's decision to choose the destination due to the external factors. The fourth part is all about components of destination image, which determine the image. Finally, consumer behaviour and gap models are discussed in the last part.

#### 3.1 Types of tourism

According to Swarbrooke and Horner (1999, 29), there are 10 types of tourism: visiting friends and relatives, business tourism, religious tourism, health tourism, social tourism, educational tourism, cultural tourism, scenic tourism, hedonistic tourism, activity tourism, and special interest tourism. Of course dividing tourism into sub-types is very subjective, but authors believe that the following division of tourism allows interesting conclusion to be made regarding to the growth and development of tourism.

*Visiting friends and relatives (VFR):* People who migrate temporally or permanently create market for VFR trips. This form of tourism was stimulated by several factors, such as increased leisure time, improved transport system, and better housing. The growth of economic migration has given a strong impulse to this market. It is hard to estimate the VFR market, because much of it is domestic and no national boundaries are crossed and it is difficult to collect the information about VFR tourists, since they don't use accommodation establishments. Furthermore, this form of tourism brings little benefit for accommodation suppliers. Nevertheless it can help develop considerable new business for transport operators and travel agents (Swarbrooke & Horner, 1999, 29-30).

*Business tourism:* It is one of the oldest forms of tourism. In the early days business travel included activities related to trade, to selling and transporting goods to consumers.

Nowadays, this term has a larger meaning; it involves conferences, where information is exchanged, special events to launch new products, weekends to motivate or reward employees, and intensive training courses. It should be noted that there is a strong connection between leisure and business tourism. The employees have a leisure time after the working day. Therefore, they may take a leisure trip (Swarbrooke & Horner, 1999, 30-32).

*Religious tourism:* This type of tourism had already existed long time before Christianity. It includes usually visiting places of religious significance or attending religious events. There is a strong link between religious and health tourism; some people visit religious places in the hope that they will be healed. However, nowadays, in Europe religious tourism developed into another type of tourism, for instance, leisure tourism (Swarbrooke & Horner, 1999, 32-33).

*Health tourism:* One of the forms of health tourism is exploring natural phenomena for medical benefits. Another form is a trip abroad for the best medical treatment (Swarbrooke & Horner, 1999, 33-34).

*Social tourism:* There is a special welfare policy in some countries, such as Spain, France, and Germany, who offers a subsidy for the travelling for consumers with disabilities and single-parent families. Social tourism has been made by the tourism industry in order to provide a better service for them (Swarbrooke & Horner, 1999, 35).

*Educational tourism:* It is also can be called travelling to learn. There are two most popular types of educational tourism: student exchange and special interest holidays. Student exchange means that young people travel to another country in order to study and learn more about the culture and language. Exchanges are well developed in Europe, thanks to ERASMUS programme. Special Interest Holidays mean that people take a trip in order to learn something new. This type of tourism is very popular amongst early retired people (Swarbrooke & Horner, 1999, 36).

*Cultural tourism:* Cultural tourism is possessed as a “good” form of tourism, as “intelligent tourism”. This type of tourism based on the desire to experience other culture and to view the relics of previous cultures. It includes many elements of tourism market, such as visiting heritage attractions and destinations and attendance at traditional festivals, sampling national, regional or local food and beverage, watching traditional sporting events and taking part in local leisure activities, visiting workplaces. Nowadays, cultural tourism is the core of tourism industry; usually it is the main reason for visiting other countries (Swarbrooke & Horner, 1999, 36-37).

*Scenic tourism:* Spectacular natural scenery has stimulated the desire of tourists to travel, because many artists and writers drew inspiration from the natural environment. It encourages an interest in landscapes. The scenic tourism was created by people, who wanted to visit landscapes for themselves, and follow in the footsteps of their favourite painter or writer (Swarbrooke & Horner, 1999, 37).

*Hedonistic tourism:* tends to be explained by desire of sensual pleasure. This type of tourism consists of four components, so called four “S’s”: sea, sand, sun, and sex. It often has a negative impact on both the tourists themselves and the host community (Swarbrooke & Horner, 1999, 38).

*Activity tourism:* Activity tourism is a rapidly growing market, based on the desire of new experience, including concerns about health and fitness. It encompasses participating in land-based sports, taking part in water-based activities, and using modes of transport to tour areas. Activity tourism has both negative and positive impact. It may harm the physical environment, but it positively affects people’s health (Swarbrooke & Horner, 1999, 38).

*Special interest tourism:* This type of tourism is similar to activity tourism, but it differs from the latter because it involves little or no physical exertion. The types of interest are very diverse. Usually the motivation for special interest tourism is a desire to develop a new interest or indulge in an existing interest in a new or familiar location (Swarbrooke & Horner, 1999, 38-39).

The tourism itself is quite an old phenomenon. As the time goes it changes and grows. New forms of tourism appear all the time. Nevertheless, many types of tourism are linked with each other, for example, health and religious tourism.

### **3.2 Tourist destination image**

Image is something that really hard to change or influence. Often, image is a simple version of impression about the destination created by the tourists. In other words, it is an important component that affects future customers' decision making process and behaviour. The image lets customers distinguish one destination from its competitors.

The definition of “destination image” depends on different factors, such as context, stereotypes, tourism promotion, etc. Usually this term is defined as “the attitude, perception, beliefs and ideas by holds about a particular geographic are formed by the cognitive image of a particular destination” (Gartner, 2000, 295). According to Cooper & Hall (2008), the image is critical for tourist destinations as follows:

- A visitor has an image about the destination already before the actual visiting.
- The tourist's image of the destination is straightaway changed by the experience, once they visit a place.

Thereby, the destination image has the influence on tourist behaviour and decision-making. It is a very significant aspect in tourism industry, because tourism products are services rather than physical goods. “The only physical evidence of a holiday destination may be in brochures, web pages, holiday snapshots or in the media”. Moreover, the perceptions of the same destination may differ among different travellers (Pike, 2004, 94-95).

Customers often actively participate in the delivery of a service, since production and consumption cannot be fully separated. In this case, travellers are passive observers rather than active participants; therefore they prefer to be more involved in tourism products process. However, travellers have different opinion and perceptions about



the same destination experience, thereby may be caused different perceptions of value (Pike, 2004, 95).

Destination services are perishable. Services cannot be stored for sale later during high-demand periods. Individual businesses try to match capacity with levels of demand through measures such as yield management and sales promotions. This presents challenges in forecasting the impacts of seasonality, periodicity, special events, and exogenous events (Pike, 2004, 95).

One destination can be substituted for another in crowded market, because nowadays there are a myriad of destinations available for the travellers to satisfy their needs. Images can provide a pre-taste for the travellers who select the destination their never previously visited (Pike, 2004, 95).

There are two levels, organic and induced, that form images. The organic image is formed by the influence of individual's everyday assimilation of information, which includes a range of mediums, from school geography to mass media. The induced image is developed through the influence of tourism promotions directed by the markets. This happens when a traveller starts to source information for a vacation (Pike, 2004, 95).

### **3.3 The process of destination image formation**

Reynolds (1965, 69) defined the process of destination image formation as “the development of a mental construct based upon a few impressions chosen from a flood of information”. By “flood of information” he meant many sources including promotional literature (travel brochures, posters), opinions of others (family, friends), and mass media (television, newspapers, books, magazines, movies). All of these factors mentioned above influence the decision-making process of a traveller on the stage of pre-visiting. By the actually visiting the destination, the image will be changed by the personal experience and first hand information (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003).

Gunn (1988) developed a model on the formation of image influenced by sources of information mentioned above. There are seven phases of travel experience:

1. Accumulation of mental image about the destination.
2. Modification of this image by further information.
3. Choosing the destination.
4. Travel to the destination.
5. Participation at the destination.
6. Return home.
7. Modification of images based on the vacation experience (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003, 38).

Phases 1 to 3 are called “pre-visitation stages”, phases 4 to 5 “during-visitation stages”, phases 6 to 7 “post-visitation stages”. In Phase 1, image is based upon information assimilated from non-touristic, non-commercial sources, such as the general media, education, and the opinions of family and friends. In Phase 2, the image of travellers is affected by commercial sources of information, such as brochures and travel agents. Since the Phase 2 is affected by the market, in most cases the image of a destination is created in the positive way. In the final Phase 7, personal experience and first-hand information are used to modify the destination image. Therefore, the image of the destination is more realistic, complex, and differentiated (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003, 38-39).

Other factor influencing image formation is determined by the distance to the destination. Hunt (1975) and Scott et al. (1978) found out that people are more likely to visit the destination near their homes and thereby to be exposed to the information about them through the media and from friends and family. The authors suggested that individuals tend to have a stronger and more realistic image of a destination if this place is near their home (Jenkins, 1999, 3).

However, there is a suggestion that often individuals have a certain image about a destination even if they have never visited it or they have been influenced by commercial form of information (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003, 39).

### 3.4 The components of destination image

The image of the destination is very hard to measure, because besides tangible components such as scenery, climate, and congestion, there are intangible components that appeal to emotion.

Echtner & Ritchie (1991) suggested that images of the destinations can be based on from functional and psycho-logical traits to more unique features, feelings, and auras. As it states in Figure 1, there are four components for dimension destination image: attributes, functional characteristics, holistic (imagery), and psychological characteristics. These dimensions can be assessed in accordance with common and unique characteristics of attributes (Olivia H. Jenkins, 1999).

*Common functional attributes* include characteristics that are used to describe most destinations, such as climate, price level, accommodation facilities etc.

*Unique functional attributes* include signs (auras) and special events that are parts of a destination image, for instance Carnival in Rio-de-Janeiro.

*Common psychological attributes* include such kinds of characteristics as friendliness of the locals, safety, quality of service, etc.

*Unique psychological attributes* mean feelings and associations with a place or destination (Olivia H. Jenkins, 1999).

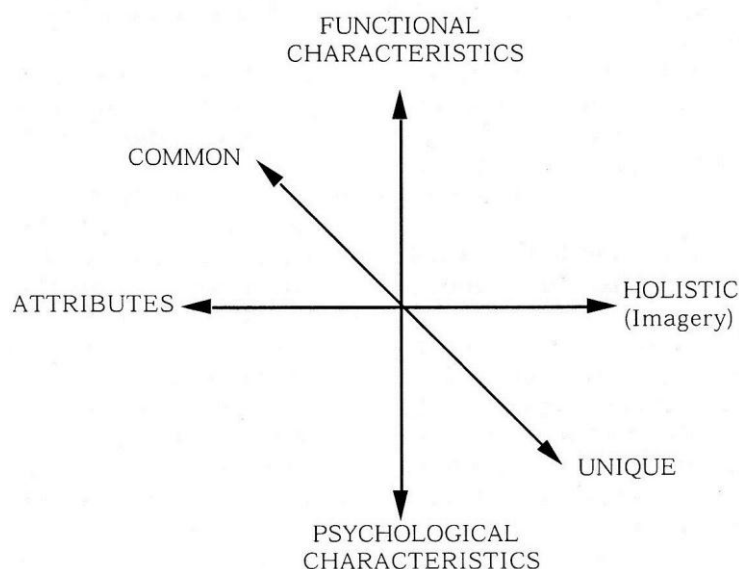


Figure 1. The components of destination image (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991)

All of these components mentioned before play a critical role in determining the image of a destination. It is very challenging to measure a destination image, because it includes psychological characteristics, which cannot be directly observed or measured. As it stated by Dichter (1985, 76), “an image is not only individual traits or qualities but also the total impression an entity makes on the minds of others”.

### **3.5 Consumer behaviour in tourism**

Consumer behaviour is a basis of marketing activity. It is an essential part of understanding why people choose a certain destination and what kind of factors affects them. The decision process of buying tourism product or service takes a lot of time, because they are mostly intangible and there are a lot of risks involved in the process of buying. Horner and Swarbrooke (1996, 6) define consumer behaviour as “the study of why people buy the product they do, and how they make their decision”. Solomon (1996) incorporated the concept of consumer needs and wants into consumer behaviour: “consumer behaviour is the process involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use, or dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy needs and wants.”

The main target of a tourist organization is constantly to predict what customers want both now and in the future, their needs, and demands. These organizations also have to understand how and why a consumer makes a choice so that they will be able to persuade a consumer to choose their products or services (Horner and Swarbrooke, 1996, 6-8).

There are many models that describe this complex process of buying behaviour, such as Woodside and Lysonski’s general model of traveller leisure destination awareness and choice and Middleton’s a stimulus-response model of buyer behaviour.

### **3.5.1 Woodside and Lysonski's model of traveller leisure destination awareness and choice**

To date Woodside and Lysonski's general model (1989) of traveller destination choice is the most popular concept. This model consists of many details, because destination awareness is seen as the mental categorization process between spontaneously evoked destinations, rejected destinations, destinations that neither are nor actively considered and unavailable (Decrop 2006, 30-31).

According to Decrop (2006, 31), there are also significant variables that distinguish this model from any other such as:

- affective associations; this variable includes specific feelings related to a particular destination;
- traveller destination preferences; usually influenced by both destination awareness and affective associations, and result is seen in a ranking destination;
- intentions to visit a particular destination; perceived possibility of visiting a particular destination within a specific time period.

The Woodside and Lysonski's model is represented in the Figure 2. The arrows show how variables are connected with each other.

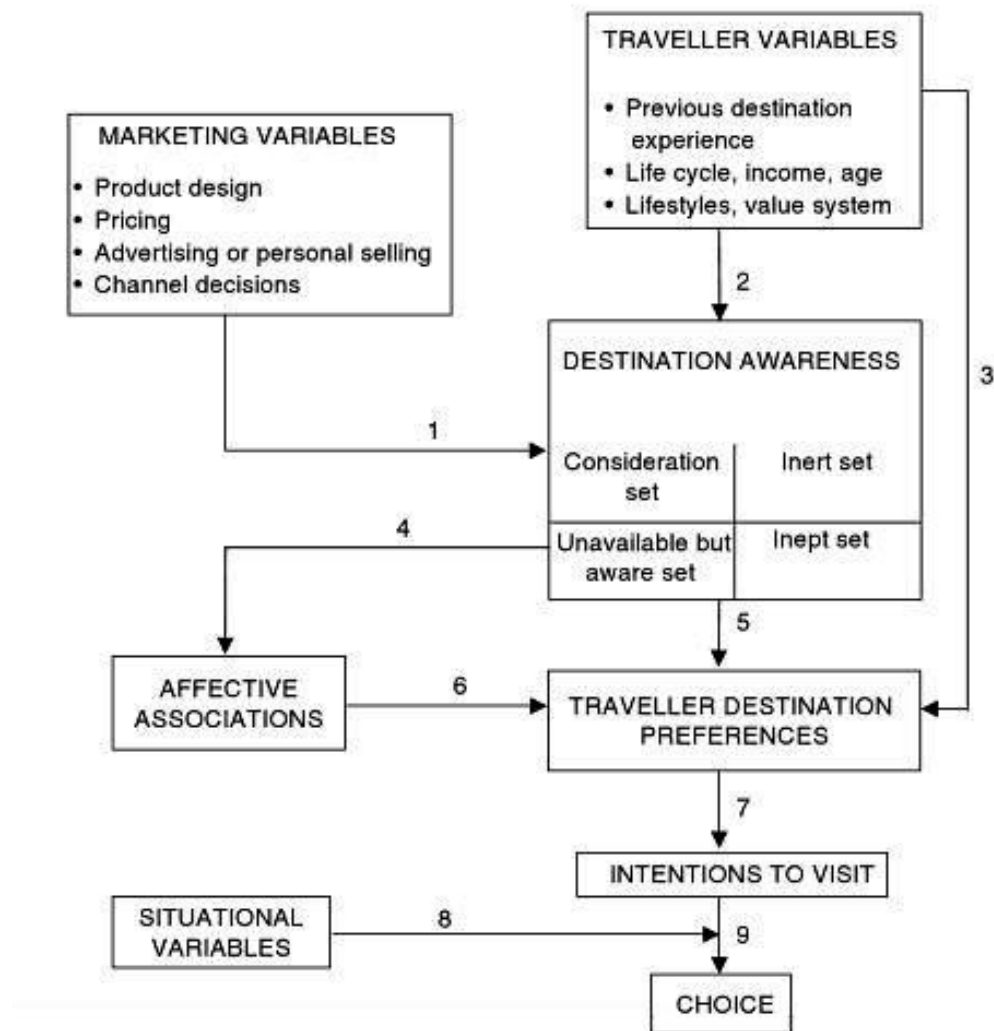


Figure 2. General model of traveller leisure destination awareness and choice (Woodside and Lysonski, 1989)

Arrows 1 and 2 in Figure 2 show that destination awareness is influenced by both marketing mix (four P's – promotion, place, price, and product) and the traveller's own variables (especially previous experience, socio-demographics, lifestyle, and value system). These variables may increase the possibility of the destination to be taken into consideration by the traveller (Decrop 2006, 31).

Arrows 3 and 4 show that affective associations are positive for a destination in evoked set. Negative associations appeal for a destination in rejected set. The arrows 5 and 6 show that destination awareness and positive association form traveller's destination preferences (Decrop 2006, 31).

The final decision-making of travellers is based on situational variables (arrow 8) and the intention to visit (arrow 9), which influenced positively by the customers' preferences toward the particular destination (arrow 7) (Decrop 2006, 31).

In addition, Woodside and Lysonski believed that preferences are positively affected by emotional associations and some of the traveller's variables. However, choice is predicted to be affected by the intention to visit and situational variables (Decrop 2006, 31).

### 3.5.2 Middleton's a stimulus-response model of buyer behaviour

The Middleton model, which is called "stimulus-response", is not that comprehensive as others, but it is adapted for better understanding buyer behaviour concept. The model is presented in Figure 3.

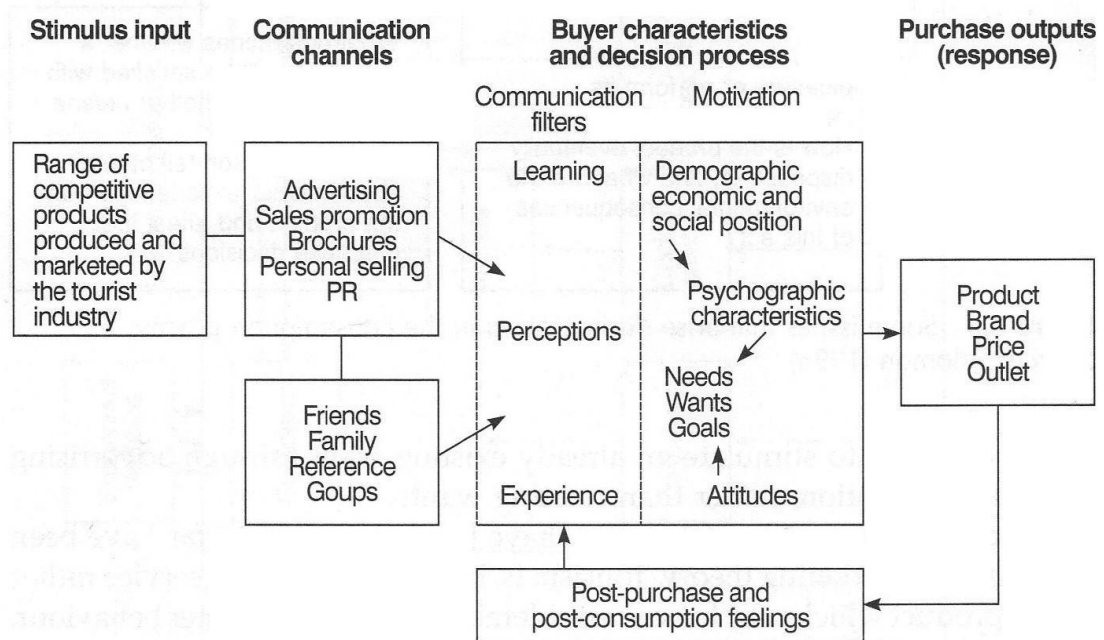


Figure 3. A stimulus-response model of buyer behaviour (Middleton 1994)

This model consists of four collaborative components: stimulus input, communication channels, purchase outputs, and the central one buyer characteristics and decision pro-

cess. Usually, stimulus input and communication channels may be easily manipulated by the marketing managers (Pizam & Mansfeld 2000, 26-27).

As **the** final result of all components mentioned above we will have a purchase outputs. Friends, family and reference group, which are the part of communication channels, play an essential role in buyer behaviour, because they have a strong influential power. Middleton suggests that motivation is bridging gap between the felt need and the decision to act or purchase. Besides, product satisfaction is the most powerful means of influencing buyer behaviour. Product satisfaction is a link between post-purchase and the decision process (Pizam & Mansfeld 2000, 26-27).



## **4 Methodology**

In this chapter, information about background information of the questionnaire and chosen research method is given. The research method is explained in details along with the data collection technique. Besides, there are also sub-chapters about validity and reliability.

### **4.1 Chosen research method**

Creswell (1994) determined quantitative method as “a type of research that is explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analysed using mathematically based methods (in particular statistics).” Quantitative research method is the most scientific way of analysing data. Usually, it is characterized by systematic collection of data, in order to gather clear and unbiased picture of a phenomenon. The main target of this method is to describe an aspect with the help of numbers; therefore the data will be numerical (Tolmie A, Muijs D & McArteer 2011, 1-2).

The researcher has chosen exactly this method, because quantitative research allows getting a depth insight into a certain phenomenon with the help of numbers. Since the main target of the research is to collect opinions of people from St-Petersburg about Helsinki and to find out what kind of image they have of the capital of Finland, quantitative research is the most suitable method of all. Therefore, quantitative research method is the most convenient way to gather information about a phenomenon among a large number of people. In order to collect numerical data there was created a questionnaire in both Russian and English.

### **4.2 Background information of the survey**

To collect empirical data there was created a questionnaire (see Appendix 1). Originally, it was conducted in English, but in order to prevent misunderstanding and false data the survey was translated into Russian language as well.

The questionnaire is divided in five parts. The first part consists of questions regarding the background information about respondents. There are such questions as those about nationality, age, gender, and occupation.

The second part is about travel experience of respondents. It is very essential to find out whether individuals have much travel experience; therefore they have more comprehensive and unbiased opinion about the destination. There are such kinds of questions as how often individuals travel per year and where do they travel.

The third part is about respondents' travel experience in Helsinki and their information channels. There are multiple-choice questions about how many times individuals have been to Helsinki and where they have heard about it from. There is also a scaled question about the image of Helsinki.

The fourth part is about travellers' level of awareness. The main purpose of this section is to figure out what respondents know about Helsinki. There are three open-ended questions, such as what travellers think about Helsinki, what the purpose of your visit to Helsinki is, and what they know about Helsinki (respondents had to name several facts they know about Helsinki).

The final fifth part has 17 statements about Helsinki that people had to rate in accordance to their level of agreement. This part helps to understand what Russian tourists from St Petersburg think about attributes that create destination image, such as friendliness of local people, safety, quality of service etc.

The research was conducted in St Petersburg at the bus station where people were waiting for their bus to Helsinki and at the shopping mall in the city centre where it was possible to interview a large amount of people. The research was being carried out for two weeks, from 11 April to 25 April, 2012. The other target of this research was to interview as many respondents as possible. During the public inquiry, respondents were willing to share their experience and opinion about Helsinki. Often after filling in the questionnaire they had a small short talk with the researcher.

There was also sent an online version of the questionnaire, created in Webropol. It was sent to researcher's friends and via Russian Facebook, called vk.com, to random people. Online survey was also posted in many interests groups belonging to Helsinki and travelling to Finland areas.

### **4.3 Validity**

Validity is an essential quality of quantitative research data and focused on whether the data were collected correctly for a certain research. Despite of the fact that the data were collected accurately; the serious factor is whether it is appropriate and accurate for the research aims and corresponds to the research objectives. According to Mertler & Charles (2005), the validity of data has a subsequent effect on the interpretation of the data (Mertler 2006, 112).

Validity of data can be determined through the investigation of several sources of evidence of validity (Mertler 2006, 112). There are five types of validity to establish: face validity, concurrent validity, predictive validity, construct validity, and convergent validity. These types reflect different ways of gauging the validity of a measure of a concept (Alan Bryman & Emma Bell 2007, 164-165).

Face validity: it is essentially intuitive process. The researcher has to find out whether the measure reflects the content of the concept in question. Face validity might be established by asking people with expertise and experience whether or not the measure seems to be getting at the concept (Alan Bryman & Emma Bell 2007, 164-165).

Concurrent validity: the researcher uses a criterion in which cases are known to differ and that is appropriate to the concept in question (Alan Bryman & Emma Bell 2007, 165).

Predictive validity: for this type of validity researcher employs a future criterion measure. Compare to concurrent validity, a simultaneous criterion measure is employed for predictive validity (Alan Bryman & Emma Bell 2007, 165).

Construct validity: researcher deduces hypotheses from a theory that is relevant to the concept. There are many disadvantages in this type of validity: theory or deduction might be misguided and criterion might be invalid measure of a concept (Alan Bryman & Emma Bell 2007, 165).

Convergent validity: the main target of this type of validity is to compare the validity of measure with the other methods of the same concept. Very often it is hard to indicate which method of measurement represents the most accurate picture (Alan Bryman & Emma Bell 2007, 166).

The content of the questionnaire was written in English and translated by the researcher into Russian language in order to prevent misunderstanding from respondents' side; it means that respondents clearly understood the content and meaning of each question. Besides, the researcher is a Russian native-speaker and could help people if they had some problems understanding the questions.

Overall, people had enough time to answer the questionnaire. Respondents had time to read the questions carefully. Every questionnaire was 100% complete, so it means that every question was answered. In addition, respondents answered the questions honestly, because the researcher has warned them in advance that there is no right or wrong answers and the questionnaire is anonymous.

#### **4.4 Reliability**

Reliability refers to the consistency of a measure of a concept. By a concept **it** is meant points around which a research is conducted. There are three very important factors involved while considering whether a measure is reliable, such as stability, internal reliability, and inter-observed consistency (Alan Bryman & Emma Bell 2007, 163).

Stability: the key issue is to indicate whether or not the measure is stable over **the** time that the result relating to the measure does not change. In other words, if the group of

respondents is not controlled, then with the time there will be little changes in the results gathered. To test the stability the test-retest method was used (Alan Bryman & Emma Bell 2007, 163).

Internal reliability: it applies to multiple-indicator measure. The researcher has to find out whether or not the indicators that make up the scale or index are consistent. It means that each answer to each question of a respondent is accumulated to form an overall result. It is also possible that the indicators do not indicate the same thing. For testing internal reliability the split-half method was used (Alan Bryman & Emma Bell 2007, 163).

Inter-observer consistency: when a subjective judgement is involved in recording of observations, data translation into categories, and any other activities related to the research, there is a possibility for lack of the consistency in the decisions to appear. As a result, the number of contexts is increasing (Alan Bryman & Emma Bell 2007, 163).

There are 85 people participating in the survey. The number of respondent is very small, comparing to the total number of people living in St Petersburg (about 5-6 millions). Therefore, it might lead to some less accurate data and the result cannot be generalized as a perception of the majority of Russian citizens from St Petersburg. Surely, it is impossible to get the opinions of all the Russians from St Petersburg, who has ever been to Helsinki. There is also a possibility that the results might be different, in case there were more participants.

Over the time the result of research might slightly change, because as it was already mentioned in the introduction, Russian tourists from St Petersburg visit Finland very often. Therefore, they have already well-established and formed image of Helsinki.

## 5 Result of the study

In this chapter, the researcher presents the result of the research and its analysis. The chapter begins with the basic information about the questionnaire. Then there are the results of the research presented along with the graphs and charts. In conclusion, the analysis of the research ends this chapter.

### 5.1 Questionnaire results

According to the thesis title, all the respondents participating in the survey have to be Russian people, living in St Petersburg. Therefore, the number of respondents who are Russians is 100%. Moreover, all of them have lived in St Petersburg for a long time.

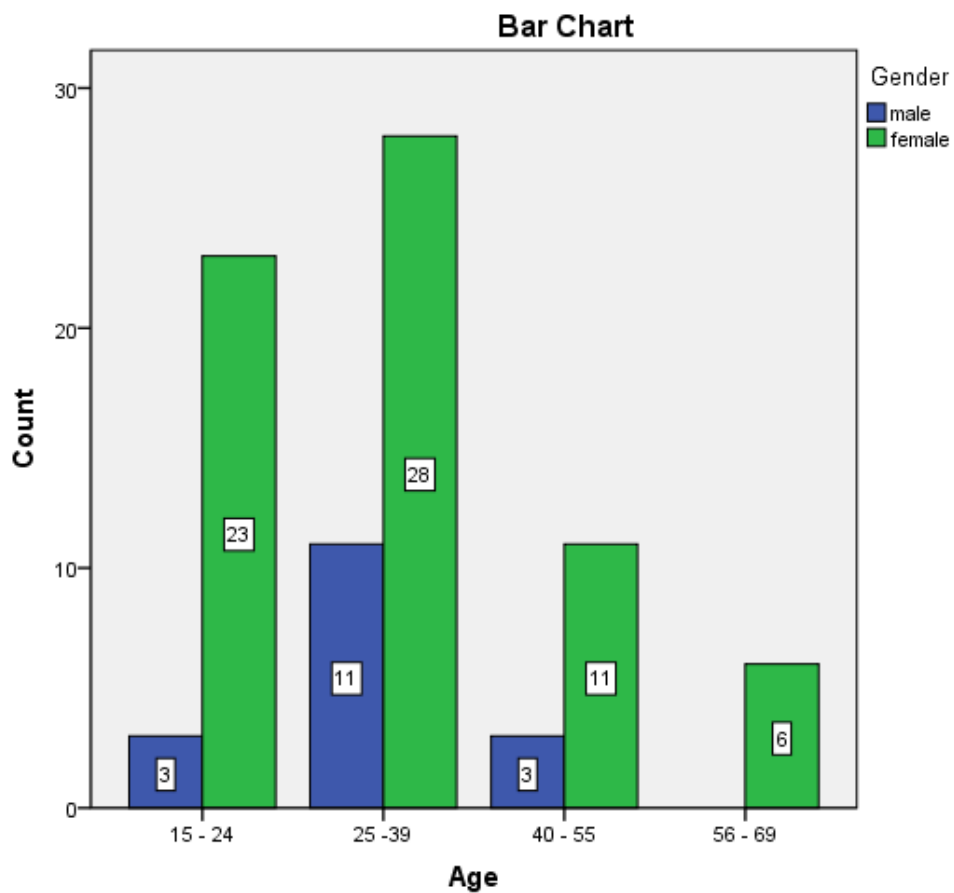


Figure 4. Number of respondents by age and gender

There were 85 respondents participating in the research. 20 respondents were male and 65 were female. In the Figure 4, respondents were divided into 4 age groups: from 15 to 24, from 25 to 39, from 40 to 55, and from 56 and older. There is also indicated the number of female and male respondents in each age group. According to the Figure 4, the most numerous age group is 25-39 years old with 39 respondents. The second biggest group is 15-24, where there were 25 respondents. The third biggest group is 14 respondents in the group of 40-55 years old people. Finally, the smallest is the group of people from 56 and older with 6 respondents.

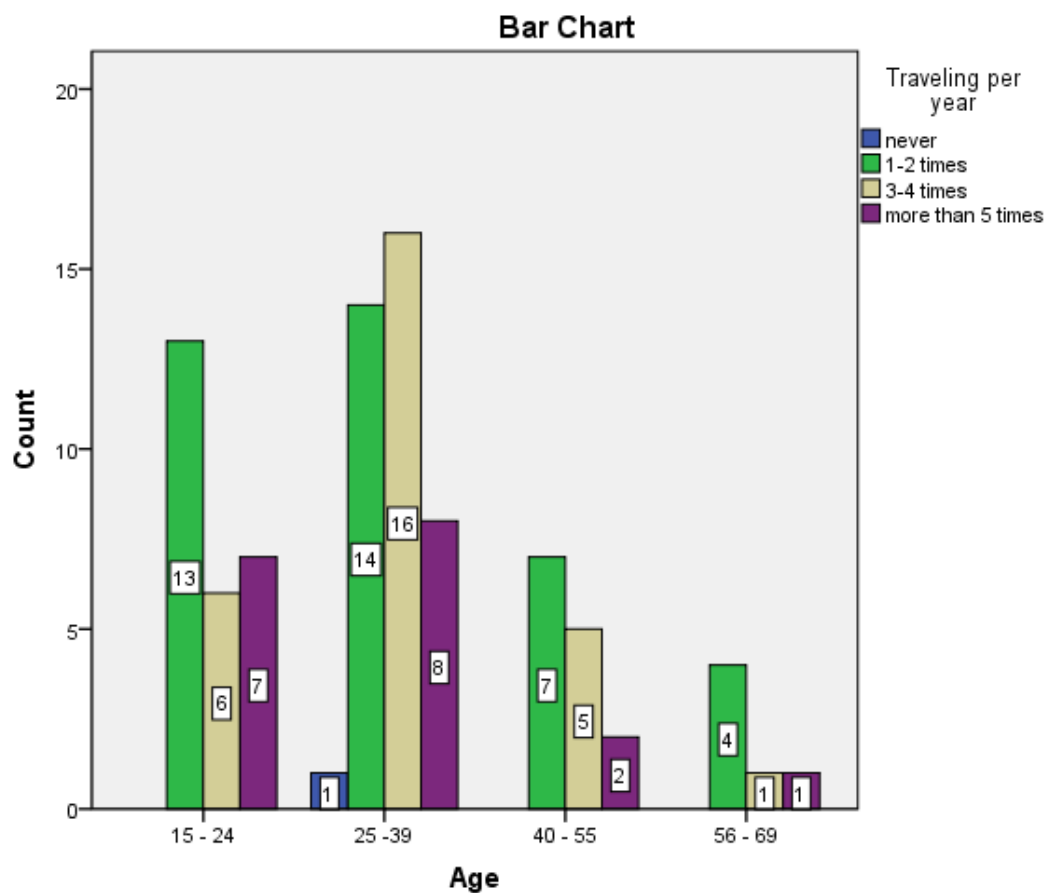


Figure 5. Number of respondents travelling per year arranged by age

The Figure 5 indicates the number of respondents travelling per year arranged by age. The figure shows that most of the respondents (38 people) from all age groups travel 1-2 times per year. Moreover, almost equal number of respondents in the age groups of 15- 24 and 25-39 (14 and 13 people, respectively) travels 1-2 times per year. 28 respondents travel 3-4 times per year. People of the age of 25-39 travel at least 3-4 times

per year. 18 respondents travel more than 5 times per year. Finally, only 1 respondent in the age group of 25-39 replied that he/she doesn't travel **at all**.

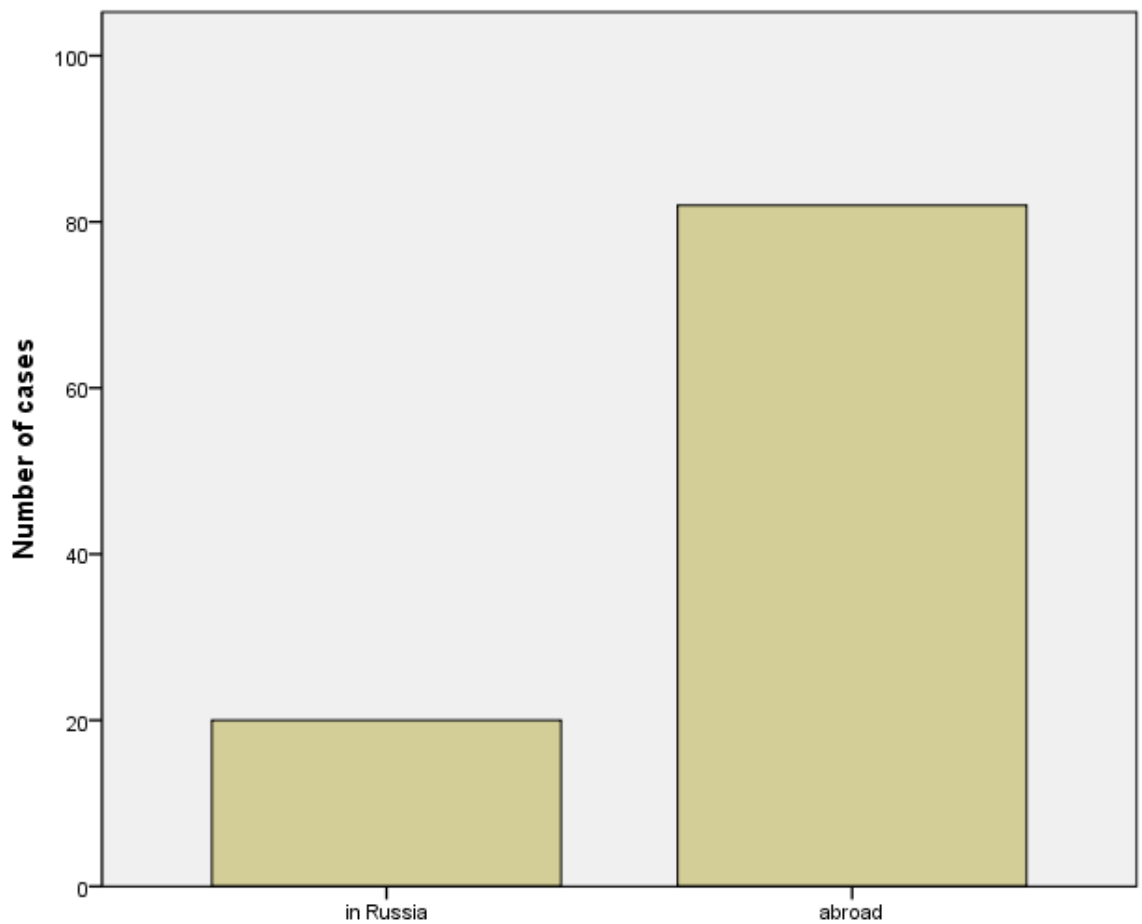


Figure 6. Where Russian tourists from St Petersburg travel

The Figure 6 indicates where respondents travel more often - inside Russia or abroad. Respondents could choose both answers. So 82 respondents travel abroad and 20 respondents travel inside Russia. Therefore, 17 respondents have chosen both options – abroad and inside Russia. Only 2 respondents have chosen only one option “inside Russia”.

In addition, respondents had to specify exactly where they were traveling. While having data analysis, the researcher found out that Russian tourists from St Petersburg travel to different countries all around the world. In most cases, they travel to the countries of the European Union and to warm countries such as Turkey, Cyprus, Egypt etc.



Some of the respondents travel to the USA, the UAE and Asian countries, for instance Thailand. The complete list of countries in which Russian tourists from St Petersburg travel, you can find in Appendix 2.

While having a live interview, many respondents mentioned that it is very hard for them to name all foreign countries they have visited. Therefore, it was easier for them just to say “to European countries”, because otherwise the list of the countries would be very long.

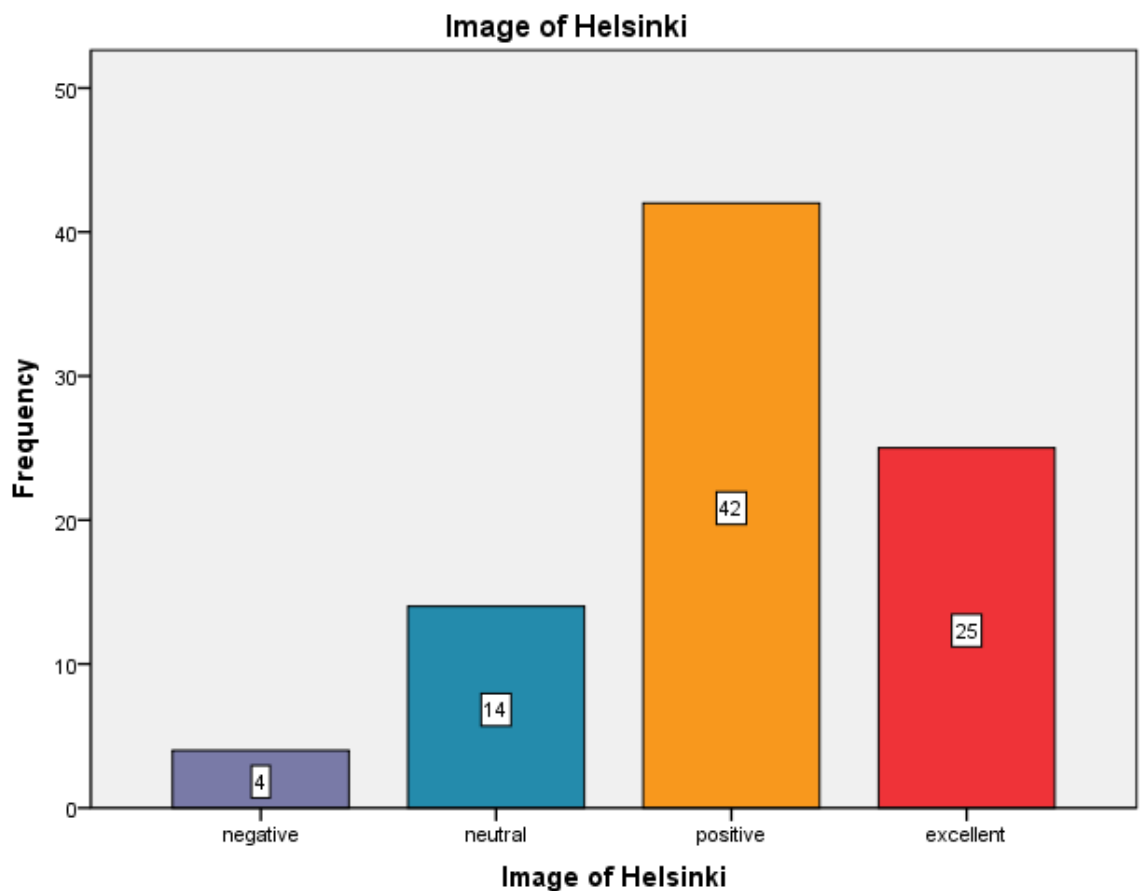


Figure 7. The image of Helsinki

The Figure 7 indicates how the image of Helsinki was rated by the respondents. The respondents had to rate the image of Helsinki from 1 to 5, where “1” is “strongly negative”, “2” is “negative”, “3” is “neutral”, “4” is “positive”, and “5” is “excellent”. This figure is very important, because the whole research is all about the image of Helsinki.

Overall, Helsinki has a positive image. Almost a half of the respondents (42 people out of 85) have rated the image as “positive”. 25 respondents (34%) have rated the image as “excellent”. Thereby, we can say that 67 respondents consider the image of Helsinki to be a good one. 14 respondents think that the image of Helsinki is “neutral”. Only 4 respondents have a “negative” image of Helsinki.

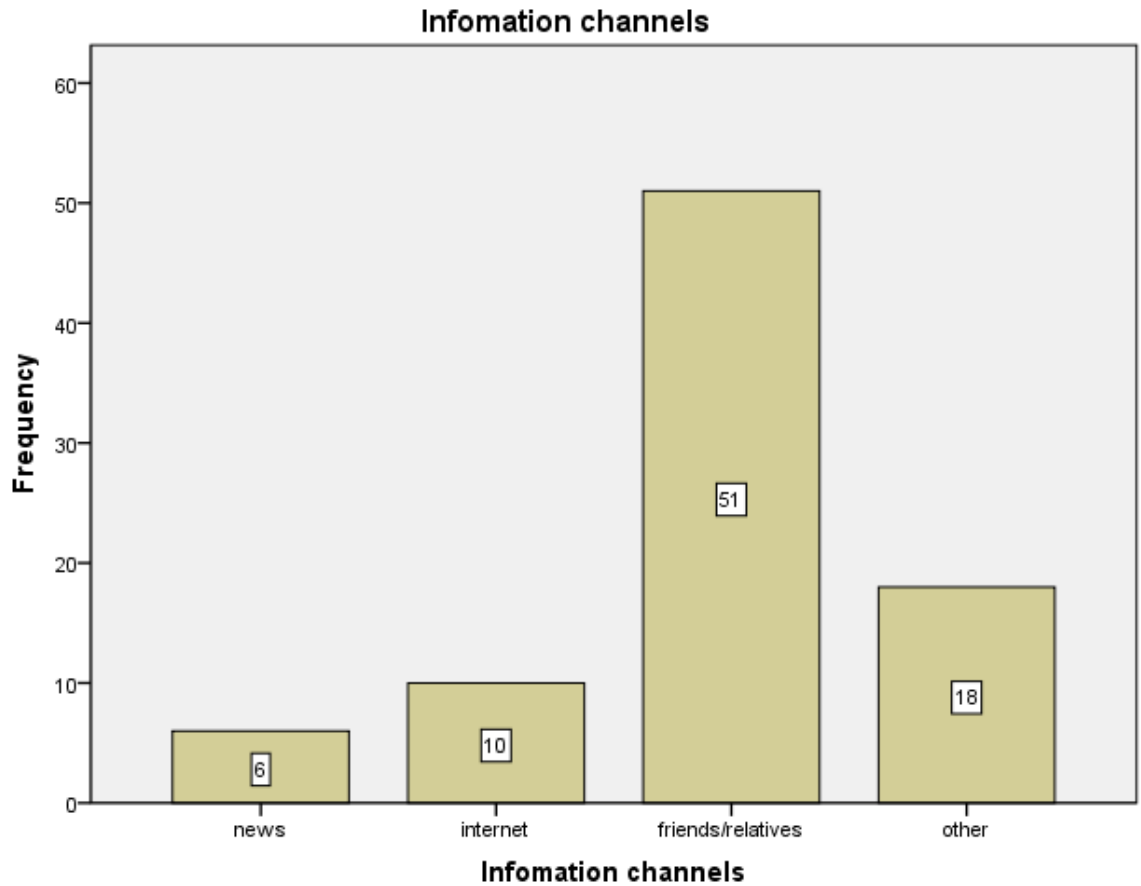


Figure 8. Information channels

The main purpose of the Figure 8 is to figure out where Russian tourists from St Petersburg found out about Helsinki, through which information channel. According to the Figure 8, more than a half of the respondents (51 people) found out about Helsinki through friends and relatives. 10 respondents found out about Helsinki through websites and the internet, 6 people have learned about Helsinki from the news. 18 respondents have chosen other alternative. 6 people out of 18 wrote that they found out about Helsinki from the course of history or school curriculum or other educational

institutions, 5 people have visited other Finnish cities, 3 have studied in Finland, 3 mentioned that you can hear about Helsinki everywhere, and through many information channels. Finally, only 1 person found out about Helsinki through brochures.

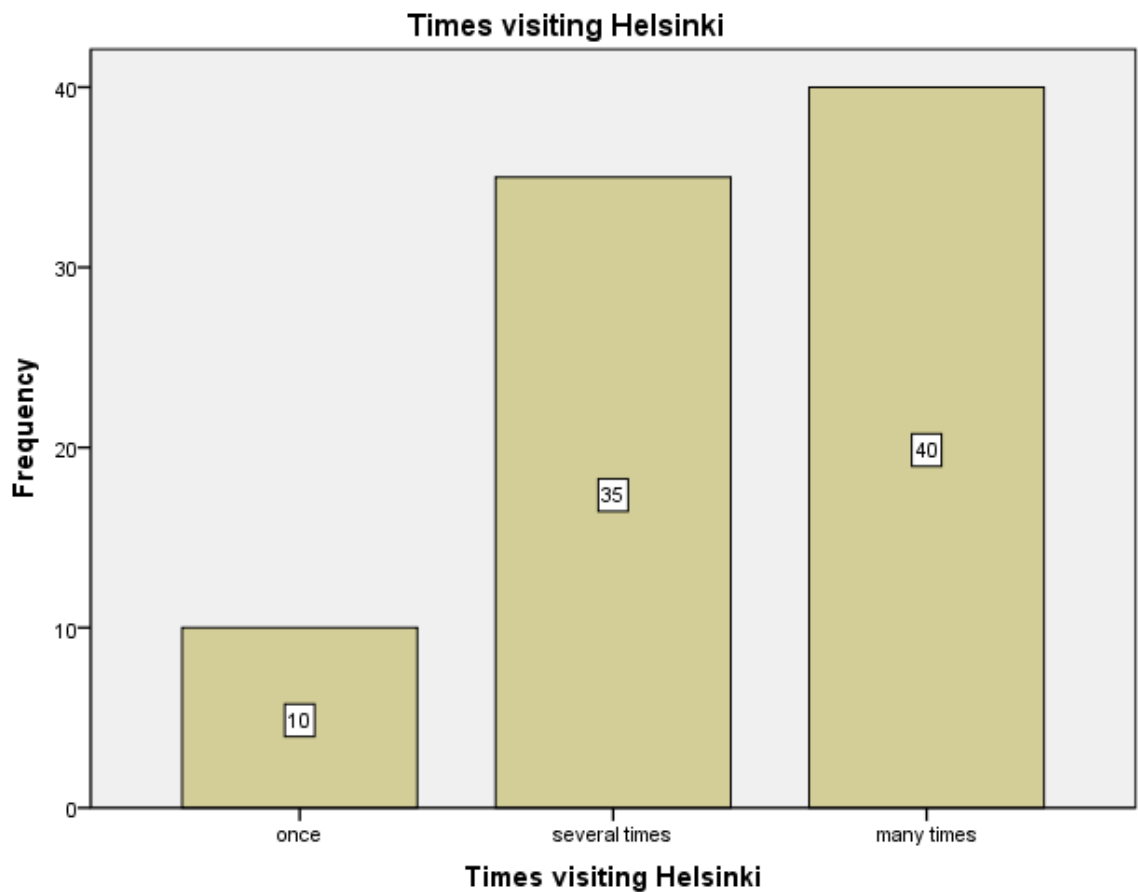


Figure 9. Number of times respondents have been to Helsinki

The main target of the next question is to see the correlation of the number of times the respondents have been to Helsinki with their age. It will help to indicate whether people participating in the survey have enough expertise in travelling to Helsinki and their judgements are reliable.

According to the Figure 9, all the respondents have been to Helsinki at least once. Only 10 persons have visited Helsinki once. 35 respondents have been to Helsinki several times (about 1-3 times). 40 respondents visited Helsinki many times, meaning more than 4 times. Therefore, the researcher's opinion is that all the respondents have enough expertise in judgement about the image attributes.

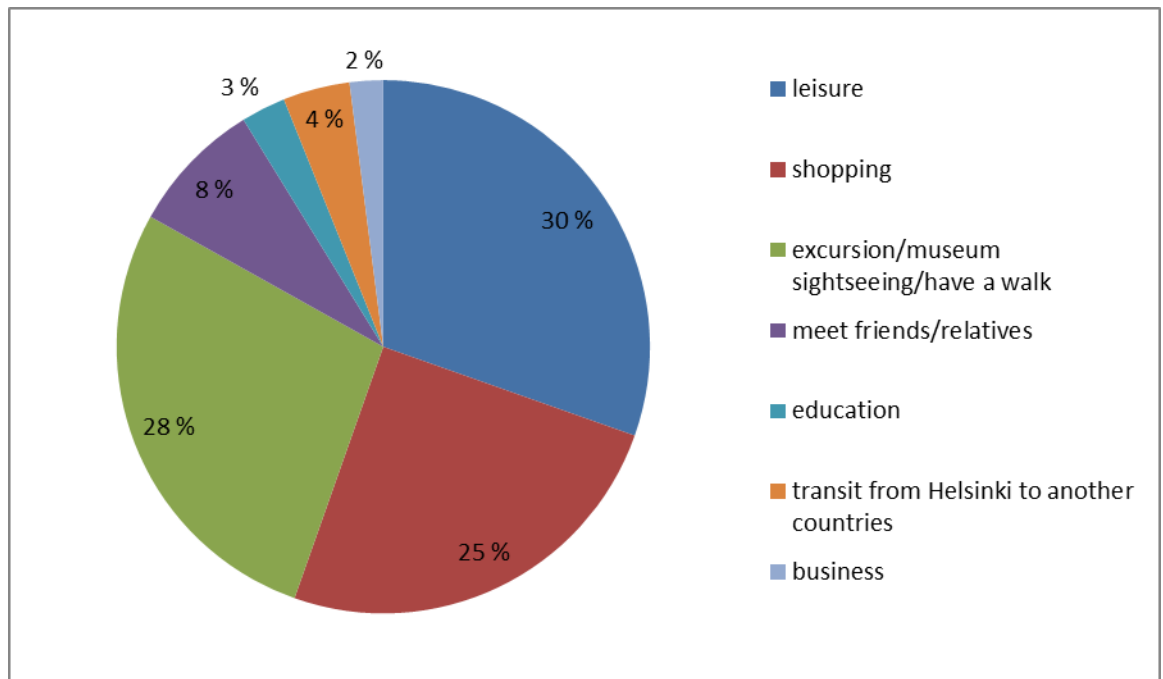


Figure 10. Reasons for travelling to Helsinki

The question about the reasons for travelling to Helsinki was an open-ended. There were many purposes why people travel to Helsinki. The researcher has organized the derived result, which can be seen in the Figure 10.

While being in Helsinki, respondents had a lot of goals and reasons for going there, according to the Figure 10, in most cases respondents travelled to Helsinki on leisure purposes (30% of respondents replied so), to do the shopping (25% of respondents), to have a walk/excursions/sightseeing or visit museums (28% of respondents). 8% of the respondents travel to Helsinki in order to visit friends or relatives. 4% of the respondents visit Helsinki, because they further go to other countries (via ferry or airport). 3% of respondents visit Helsinki on education purposes and 2% of respondents because of their business purposes.

## 5.2 Attributes of Helsinki's image

This subchapter includes 17 statements about image of Helsinki that people had to rate in appliance to their level of agreement. There are 5 levels of agreement that respondents can choose: “strongly agree”, “agree”, “don’t know”, “disagree”, and “strongly disagree”. In case people don’t have any opinion about a certain statement or haven’t

experienced one, they can choose the option “don’t know”. Therefore, the reliability of the research remains.

The main target of this subchapter is to find out what Russian tourists from St Petersburg think about attributes that create destination image. Thereby, the researcher will be able to find out their impression and perception.

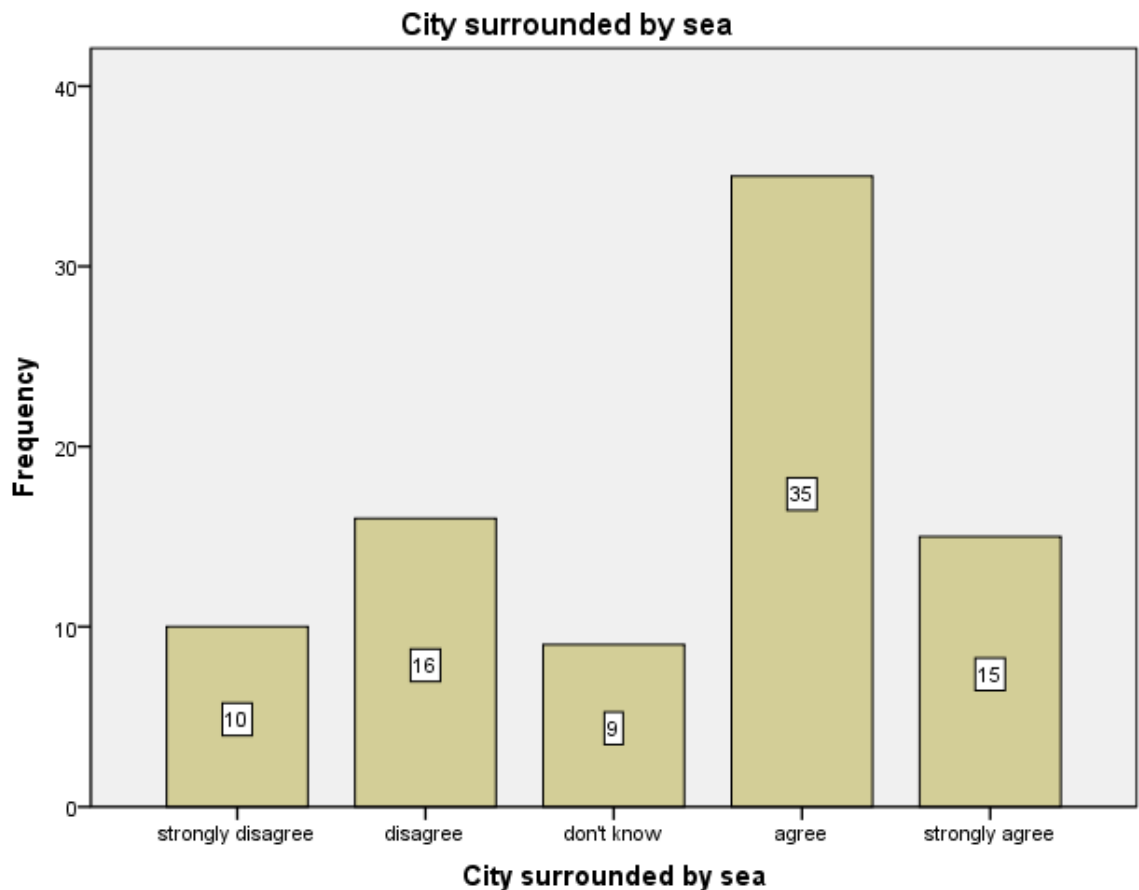


Figure 11. The opinions of respondents about the statement “Helsinki is a city surrounded by sea”

According to Figure 11, almost half of the respondents (35 people out of 85) agree with the statement “Helsinki is a city surrounded by sea”. And this statement is true; Helsinki is surrounded by the Baltic Sea. 15 respondents agreed strongly, meaning that they are extremely sure about it. 9 respondents don’t know, whether Helsinki is surrounded by sea or not. There are also 16 respondents who disagree with the statement and 10 people who strongly disagree.

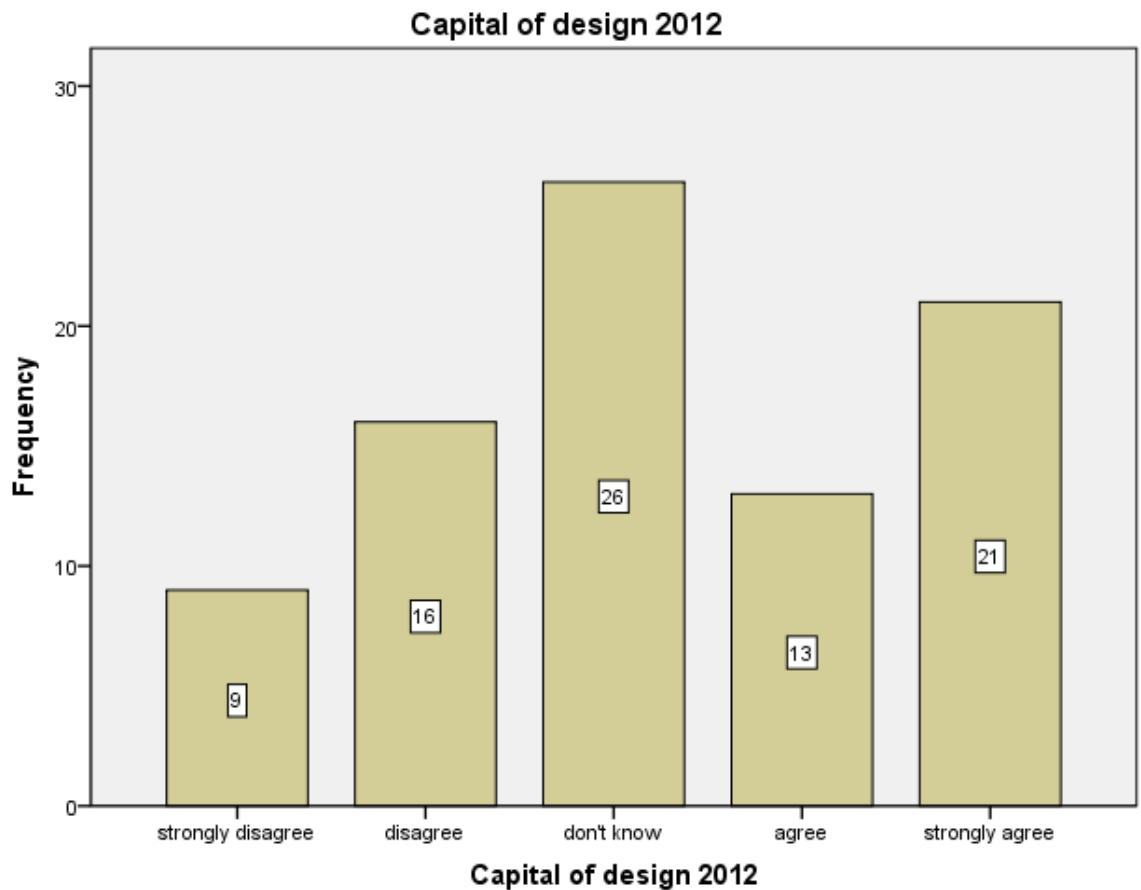


Figure 12. The opinions of respondents about the statement “Helsinki is the world capital of design 2012”

Figure 12 shows the opinions of respondents about the statement “Helsinki is the world capital of design 2012”. This statement is true; Helsinki is the world capital of design 2012. The majority of response is “don’t know”; 26 respondents don’t know that Helsinki is the world design capital 2012. The second highest rated answer is “strongly agree” by 21 respondents. 13 participants of the survey agreed with the statement. Overall, 25 people strongly disagreed and disagreed. Therefore, we can say that Russian tourists from St Petersburg are not aware of the fact that Helsinki is the world design capital 2012.

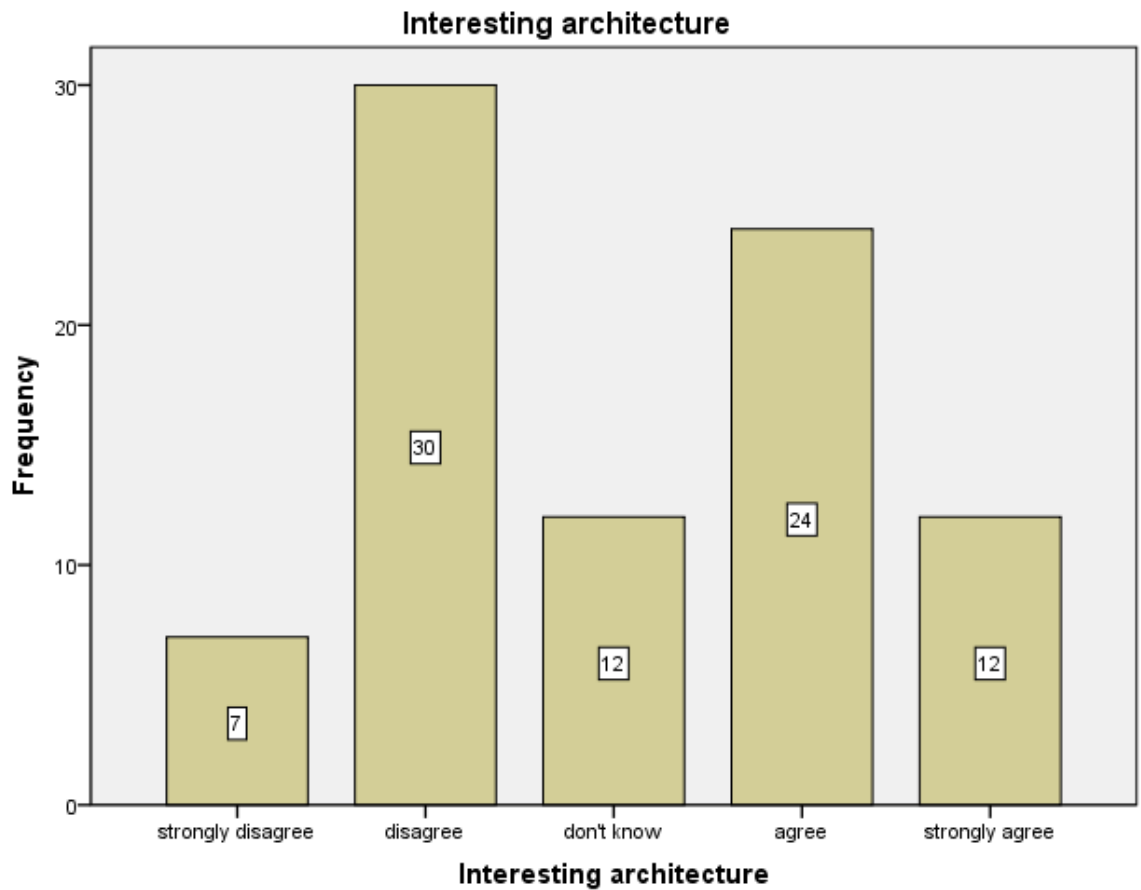


Figure 13. The opinions of the respondents about the statement “Helsinki has an interesting architecture”

Figure 13 represents opinions of the respondents about the statement “Helsinki has an interesting architecture”. The opinions of the respondents in this issue are divided almost in halves. Some of the respondents think that Helsinki has an interesting architecture and some of them don’t. Thereby, 24 respondents are agreed with the statement and 12 respondents strongly agree. Overall, we have 36 positive opinions about architecture. 30 respondents disagree with the statement and 7 people strongly disagreed. While having a life interview, people commented that in comparison to St Petersburg, the architecture in Helsinki is not that beautiful and interesting. However, 12 respondents answered “don’t know”.

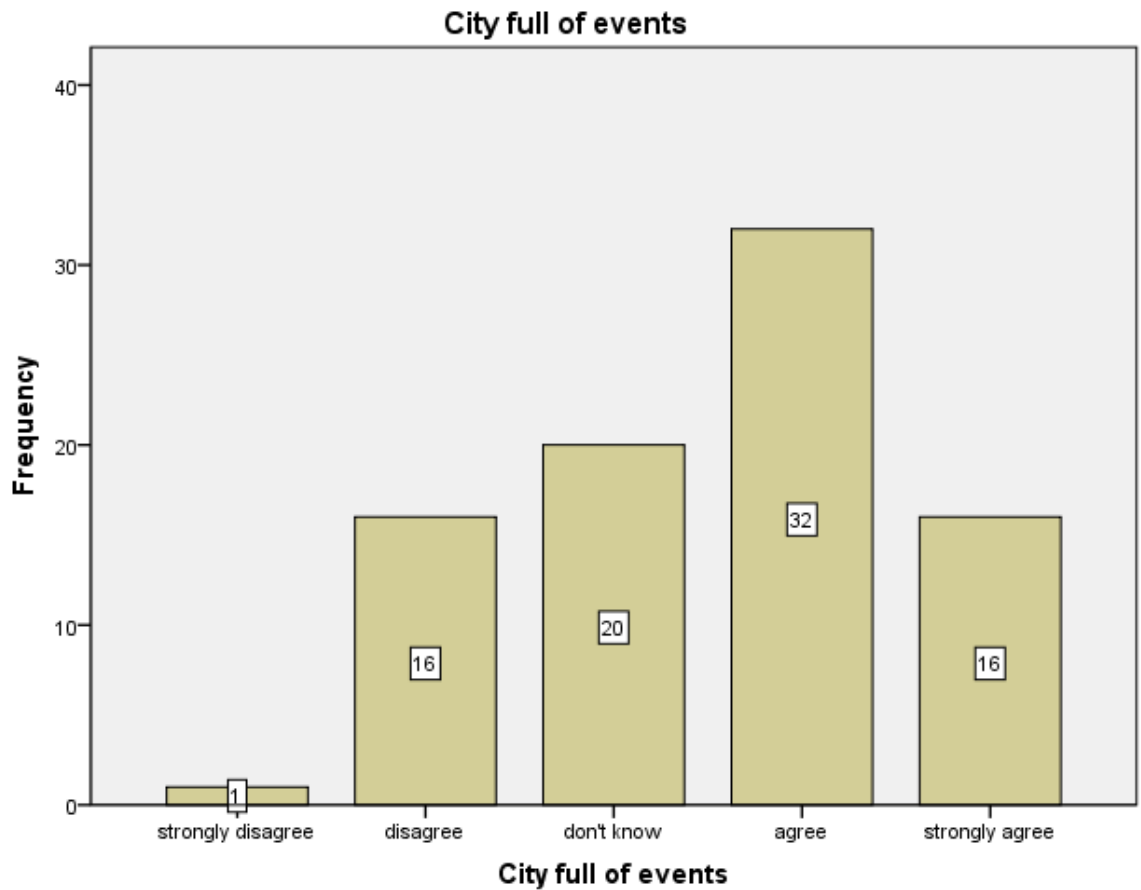


Figure 14. The opinions of the respondents about the statement “Helsinki is a city full of events”

The Figure 14 shows opinions of the respondents about the statement “Helsinki is a city full of events”. The majority of the respondents (32 persons) agreed with the statement and 16 respondents strongly agree. 20 respondents were unfamiliar with the events in Helsinki. 16 respondents disagree that Helsinki is a city full of events. Finally, only 1 respondent strongly disagrees about the issue.



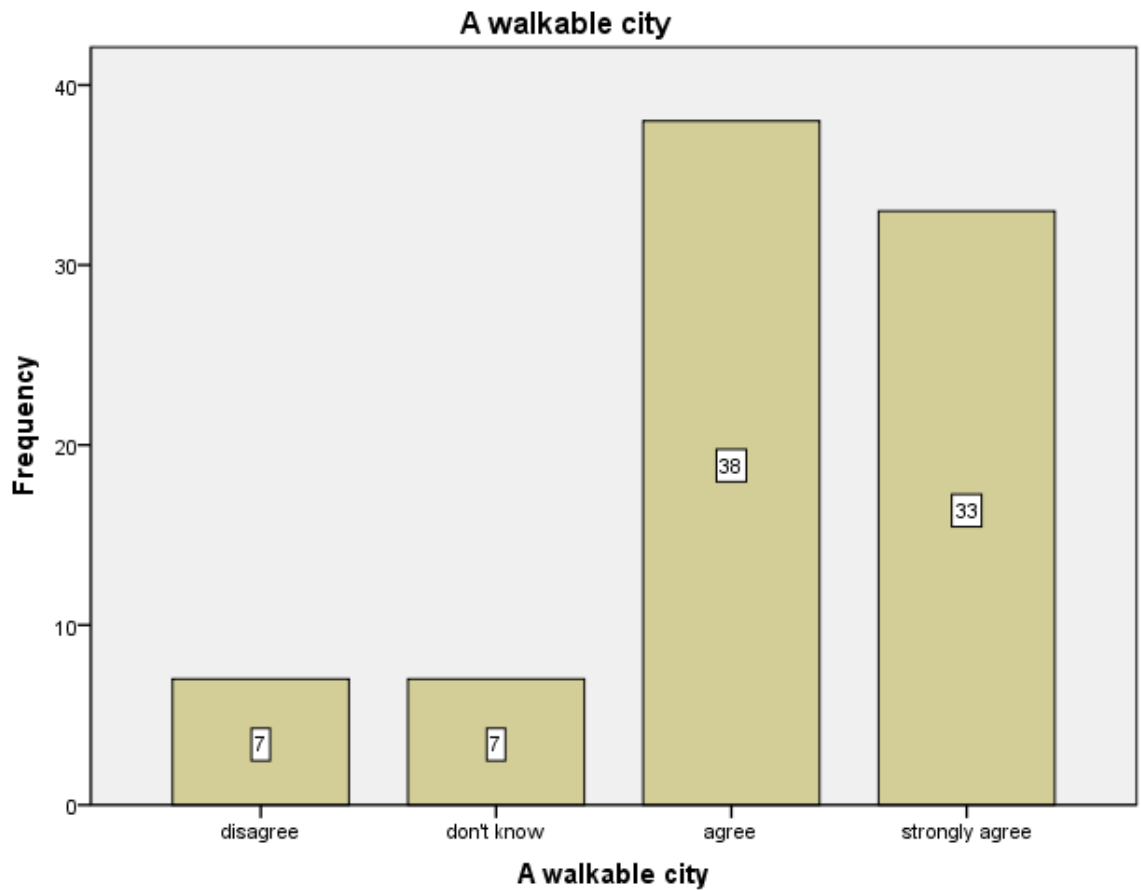


Figure 15. The opinions of the respondents about the statement “Helsinki is a walkable city”

The Figure 15 represents opinions of the respondents about the statement “Helsinki is a walkable city”. According to the Figure above, all the respondents have a very similar opinion about this issue, because 38 people agree with the statement and 33 strongly agree. Therefore, the majority of the respondents (71 persons) have a positive image of Helsinki as a walkable city. Only 7 respondents disagree with the statement. However, 7 respondents don’t have any certain opinions about this issue.

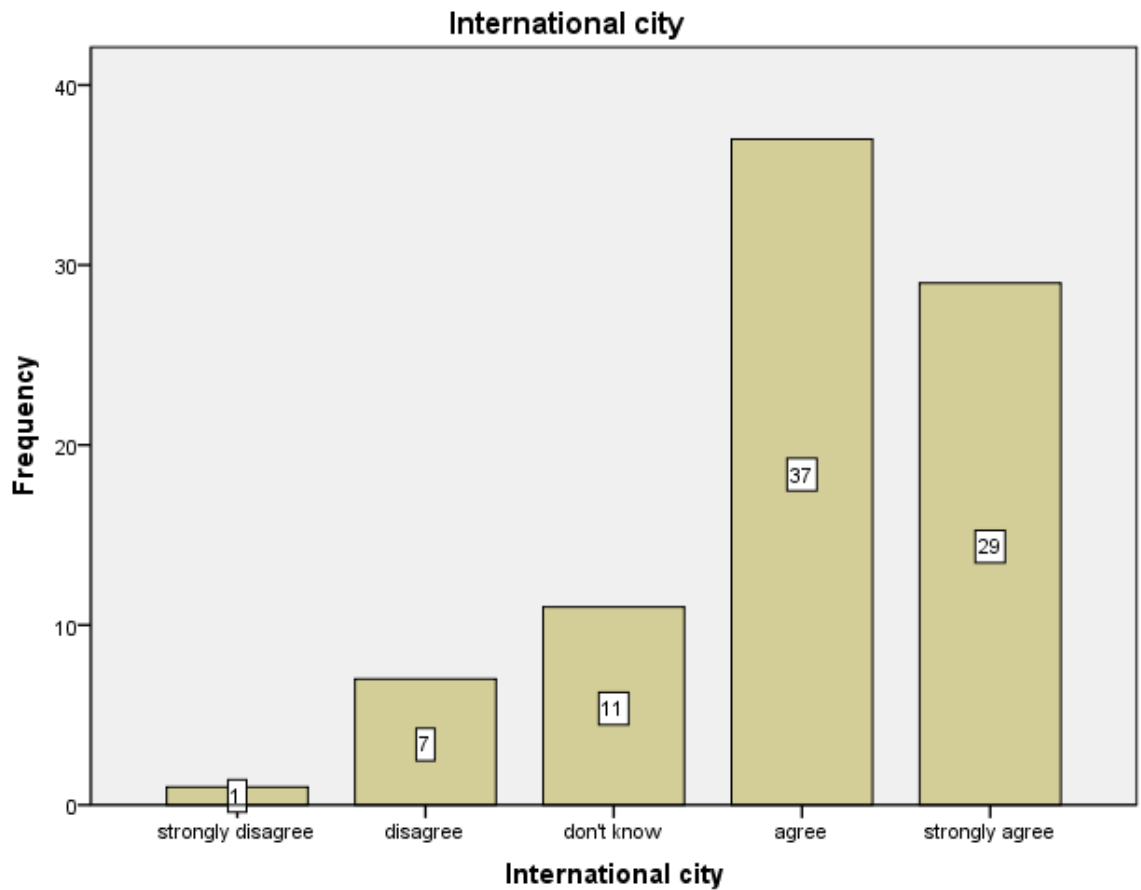


Figure 16. The opinions of the respondents about the statement “Helsinki is an international city”

The Figure 16 indicates the opinions of the respondents about the statement “Helsinki is an international city”. The opinions of the respondents about this statement are very similar and unanimous. 37 respondents agreed with the statement and 29 respondents strongly agree. 11 respondents have no clear opinion on this question and marked it as “don’t know”. 7 participants disagree with the statement. Finally, only 1 respondent strongly disagrees that Helsinki is an international city.

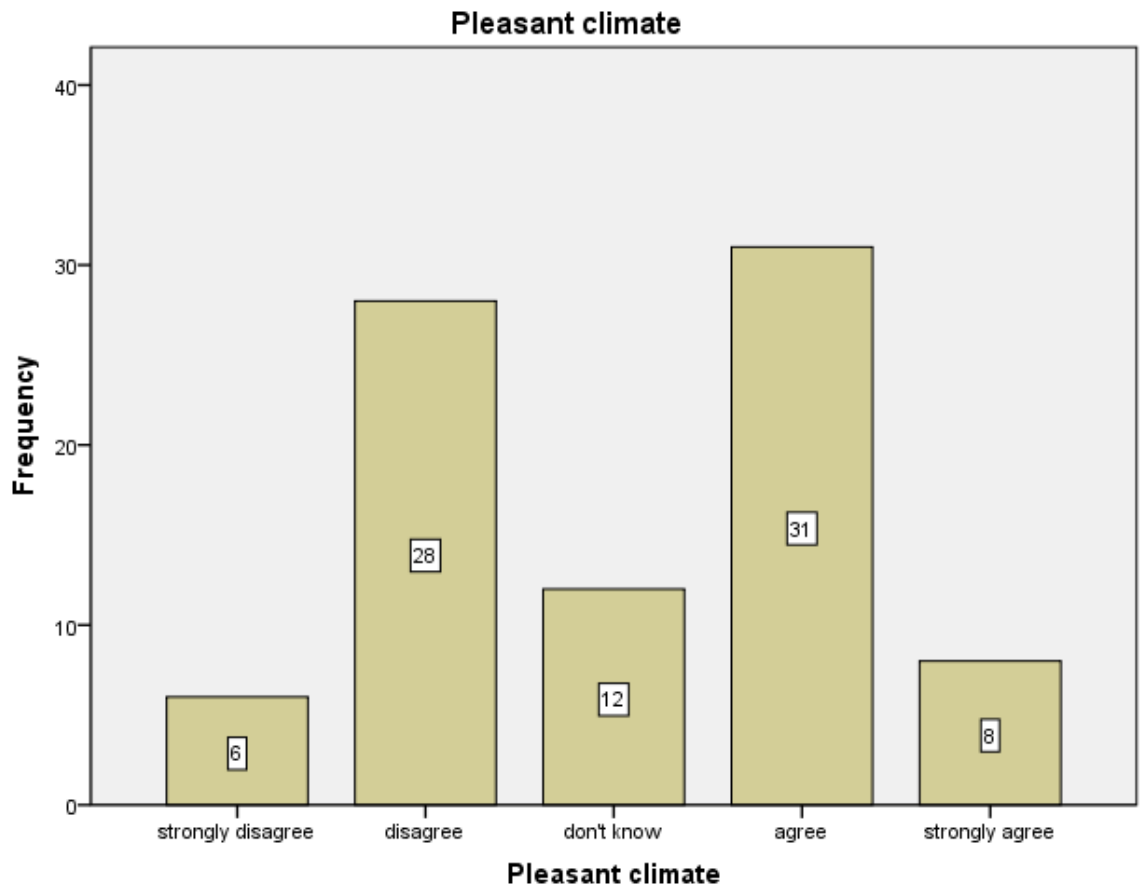


Figure 17. The opinions of the respondents about the statement “The climate in Helsinki is pleasant”

The Figure 16 represents the opinions of the respondents about the statement “The climate in Helsinki is pleasant”. The respondents have different opinions regarding this issue. 31 respondents agree and 8 respondents strongly agree with the statement. Therefore, 39 respondents think that the climate in Helsinki is pleasant. 28 disagree with the statement and 6 people strongly disagree. 12 respondents are unfamiliar with the climate in Helsinki.

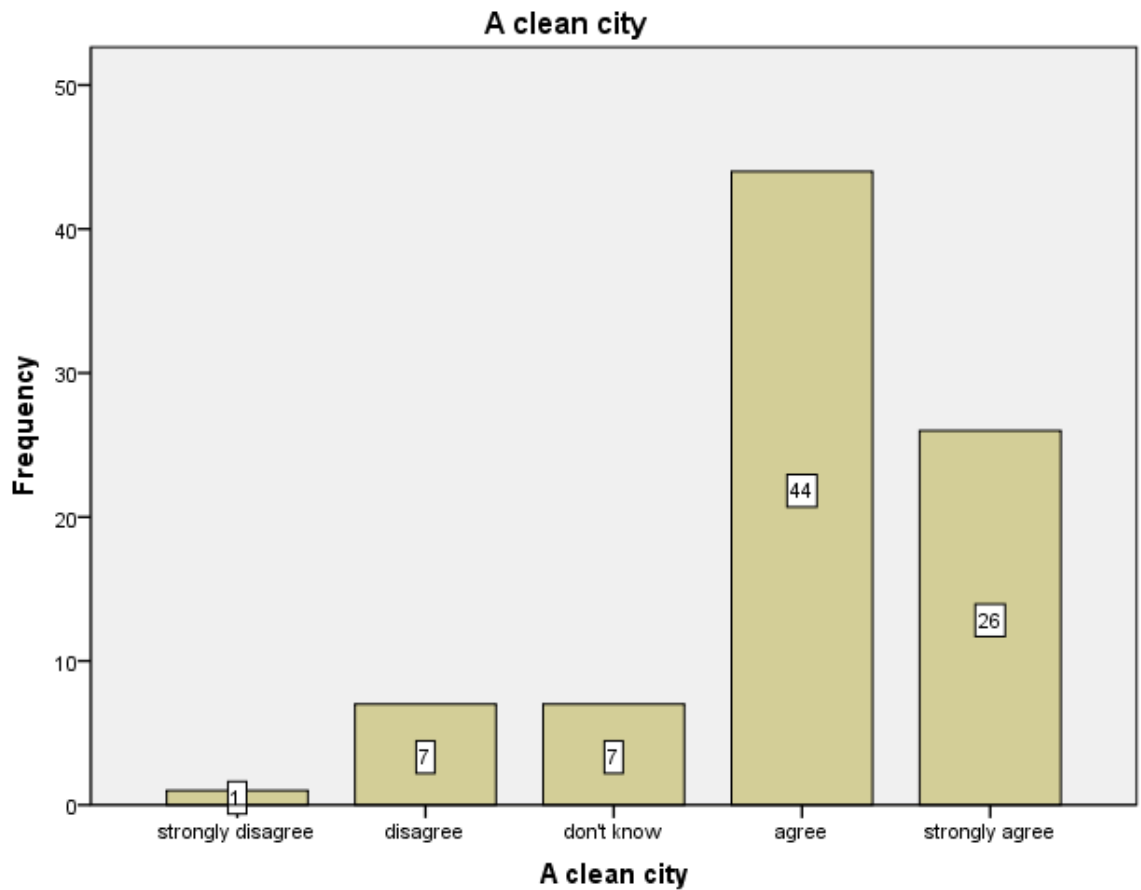


Figure 17. The opinions of the respondents about the statement “Helsinki is a clean city”

The Figure 17 represents the opinions of the respondents about the statement “Helsinki is a clean city”. In general, the respondents have a very similar and unanimous opinion about this issue. 44 respondents agree and 26 people strongly agree. It means that most of the respondents (overall 70 people out of 85 agree and strongly agree) think that Helsinki is a clean city. 7 participants of the survey have no opinion about the issue and answered “don’t know”. 7 people disagree with the statement. Only 1 respondent strongly disagrees. In addition, while taking part in a live research, many participants told that they strongly believe Helsinki is a very clean city and also mentioned this in the open-ended question “what do you think about Helsinki”.

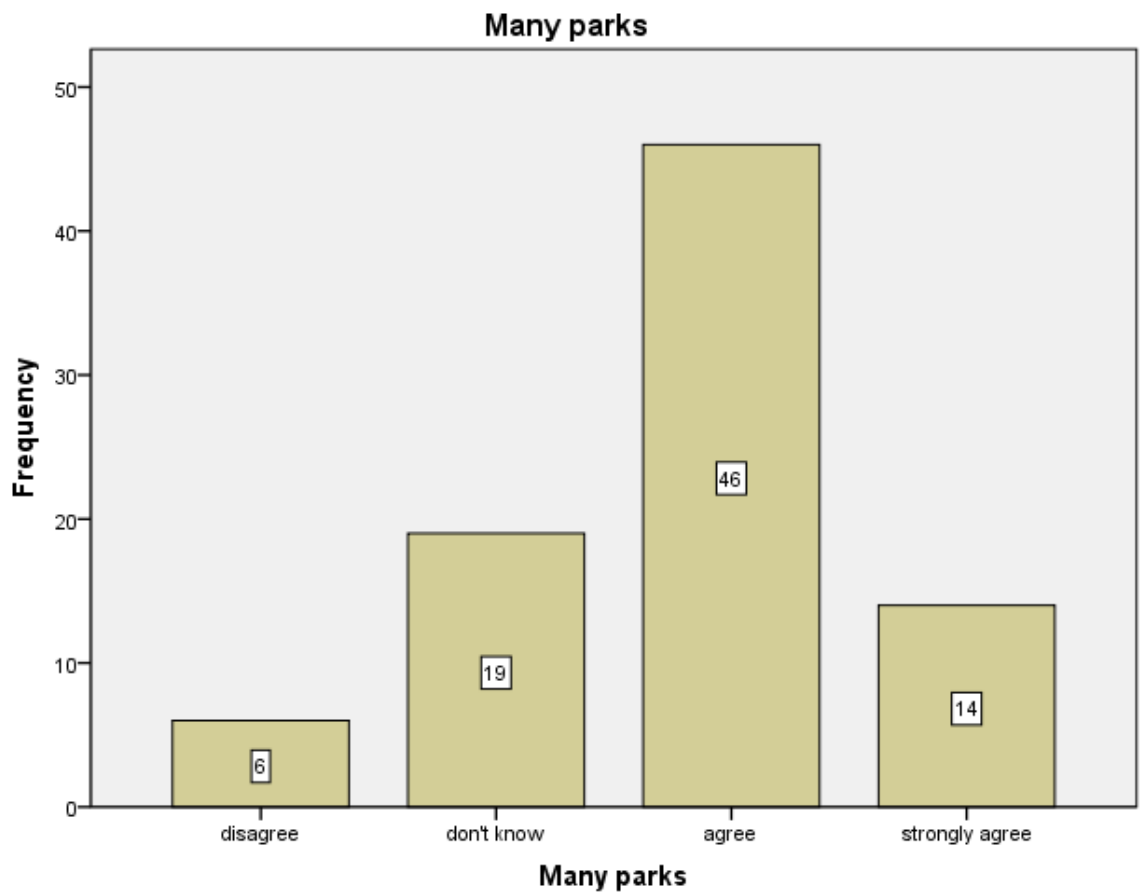


Figure 18. The opinions of the respondents about the statement “Helsinki has a lot of parks”

The Figure 18 represents the opinions of the respondents about the statement “Helsinki has a lot of parks”. According to the chart below, respondents have a similar opinion regarding this issue. More than a half of the participants (46 people) agree with the statement. 14 respondents strongly agree. Therefore, we have 60 respondents agreeing with the statements to one degree or another. 19 respondents have no opinion whether there are a lot of parks in Helsinki. 6 respondents disagree with the statement.

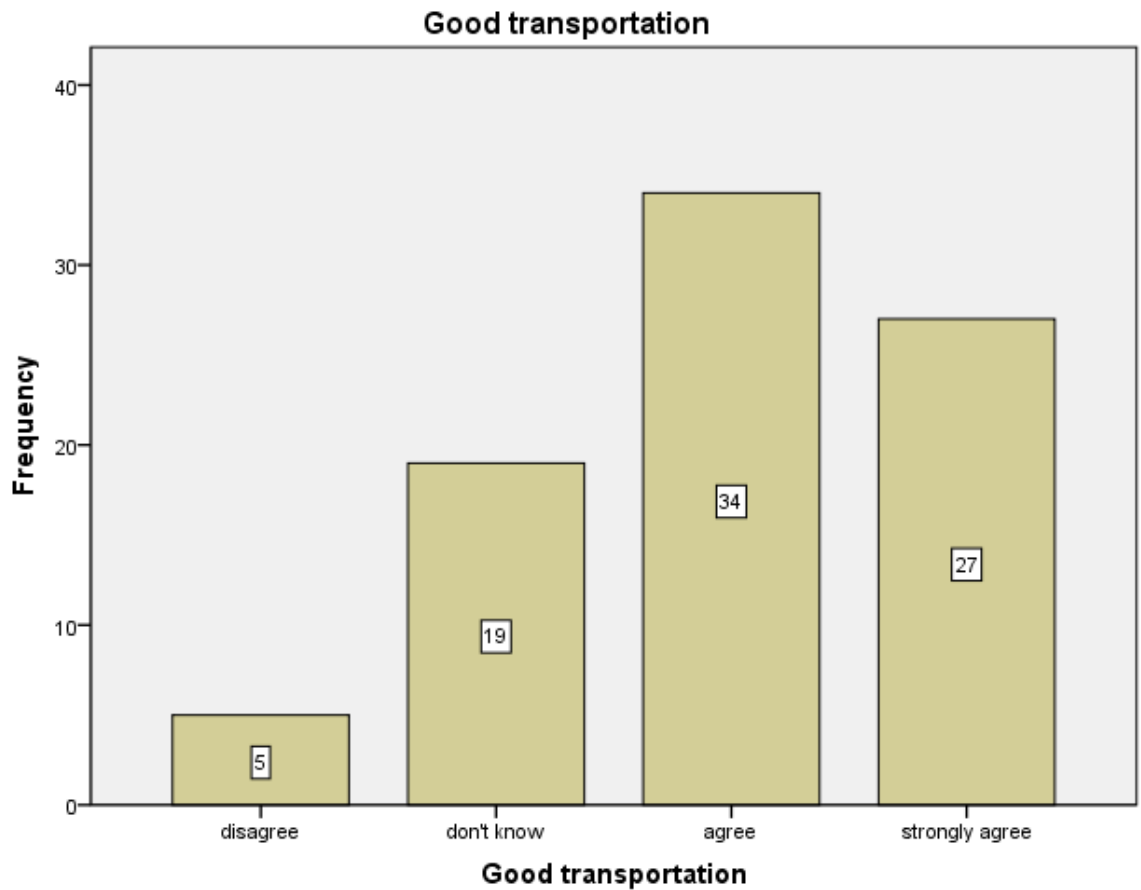


Figure 19. The opinions of the respondents about the statement “Helsinki has a good public transportation”

The Figure 19 shows the opinions of the respondents about the statement “Helsinki has a good public transportation”. According to the chart above, respondents share the same opinion about this statement, because most number of respondents (61 people) has chosen the option “agree” or “strongly agree”. 19 respondents don’t have any certain opinion about public transportation in Helsinki and marked their answers as “don’t know”. Only 5 participants disagree with the statement. While participating in the live research, many people mentioned that they have never used public transportation in Helsinki.

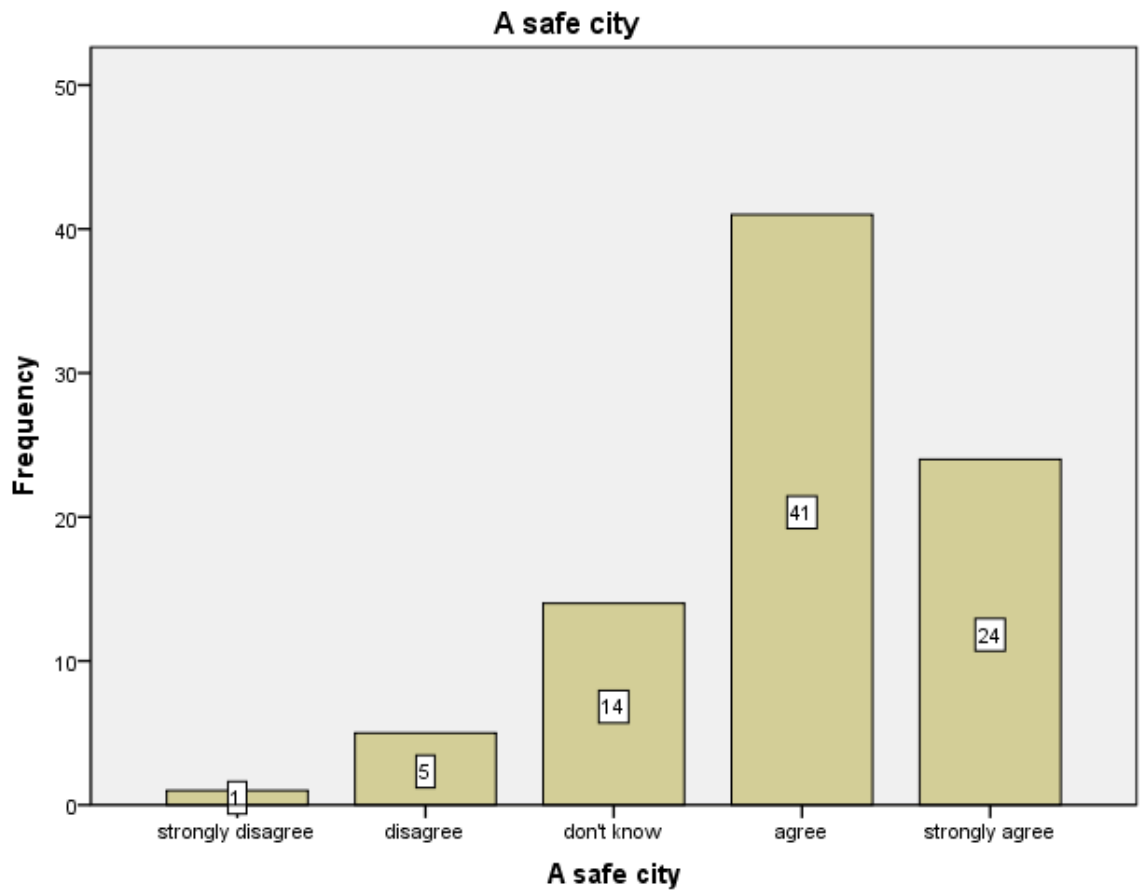


Figure 20. The opinions of the respondents about the statement “Helsinki is a safe city”

The Figure 20 represents the opinions of the respondents about the statement “Helsinki is a safe city”. In general, respondents have a unanimous opinion about this issue. 14 respondents answered this question as “don’t know”. The great majority of respondents (41 persons) have the opinion that Helsinki is a safe city; they marked their answer as “agree”. 24 respondents have chosen option “strongly agree”. However, there are 6 people who “disagree” and “strongly disagree” with the statement.

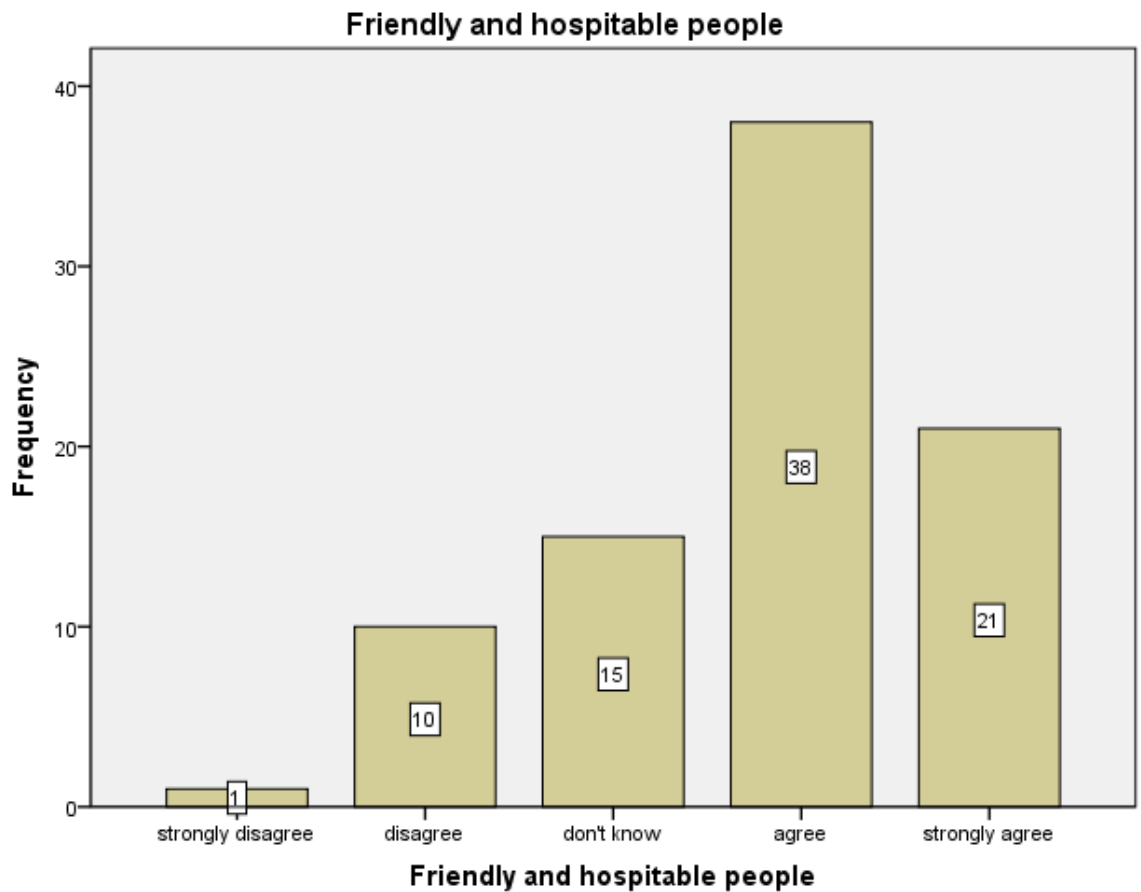


Figure 21. The opinions of the respondents about the statement “Helsinki has friendly and hospitable people”

The opinions of the respondents about the statement “Helsinki has friendly and hospitable people” are shown in the Figure 21. Most respondents think that people in Helsinki are friendly and hospitable. 38 respondents agree and 21 respondents strongly agree with the statement. Overall, we have 59 people who more or less agree with the statement. 15 respondents answer “don’t know”, because they don’t have enough experience in dealing with Finnish people. However, few respondents (10 people) disagree and 1 respondent strongly disagrees with the statement.



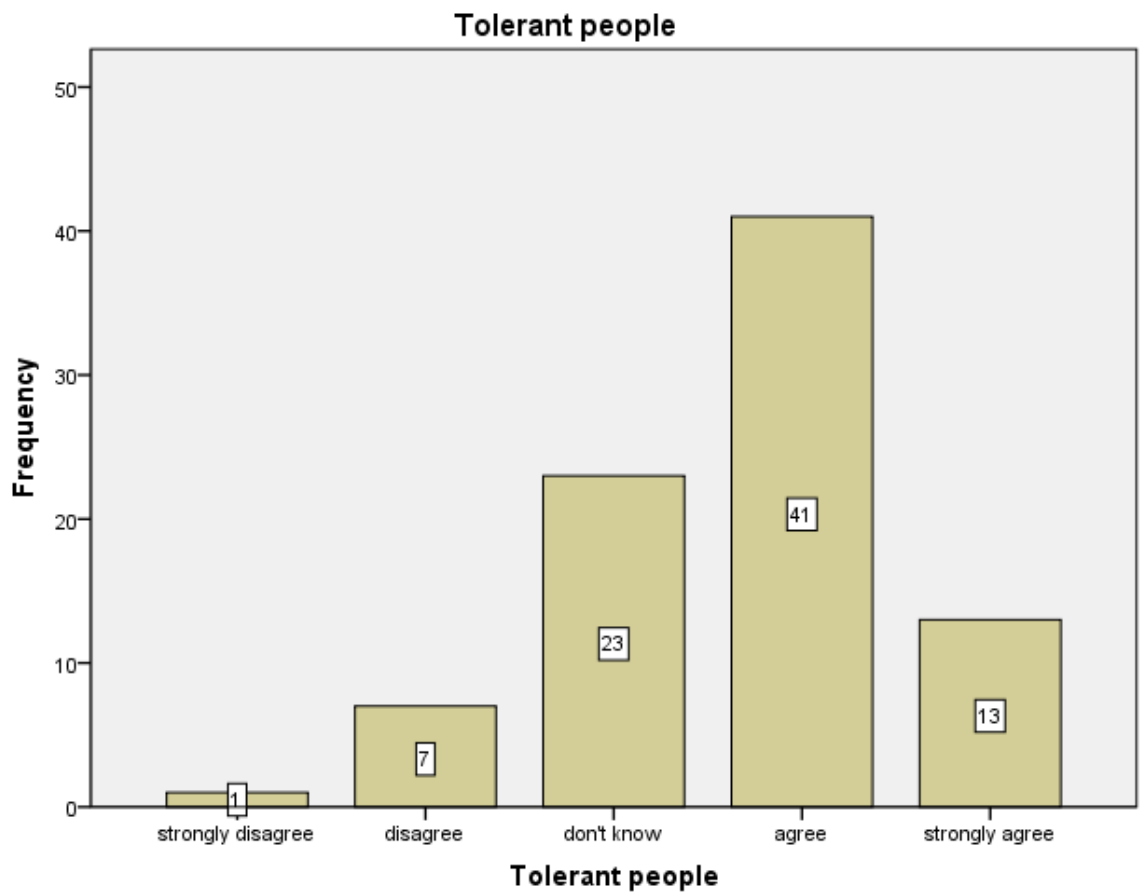


Figure 22. The opinions of the respondents about the statement “Helsinki’s inhabitants are tolerant people”

The Figure 22 represents the opinions of the respondents about the statement “Helsinki’s inhabitants are tolerant people”. In general, we can say that the respondents agree with the statement and share the same opinion about this issue. 41 respondents agree and 13 strongly agree that Helsinki’s inhabitants are tolerant people. There is also quite a big group of the respondents (23 persons) who don’t have any certain opinion about the statement. However, the small part of respondents disagrees and 1 respondent strongly disagrees with the judgement “Helsinki’s inhabitants are tolerant people”.

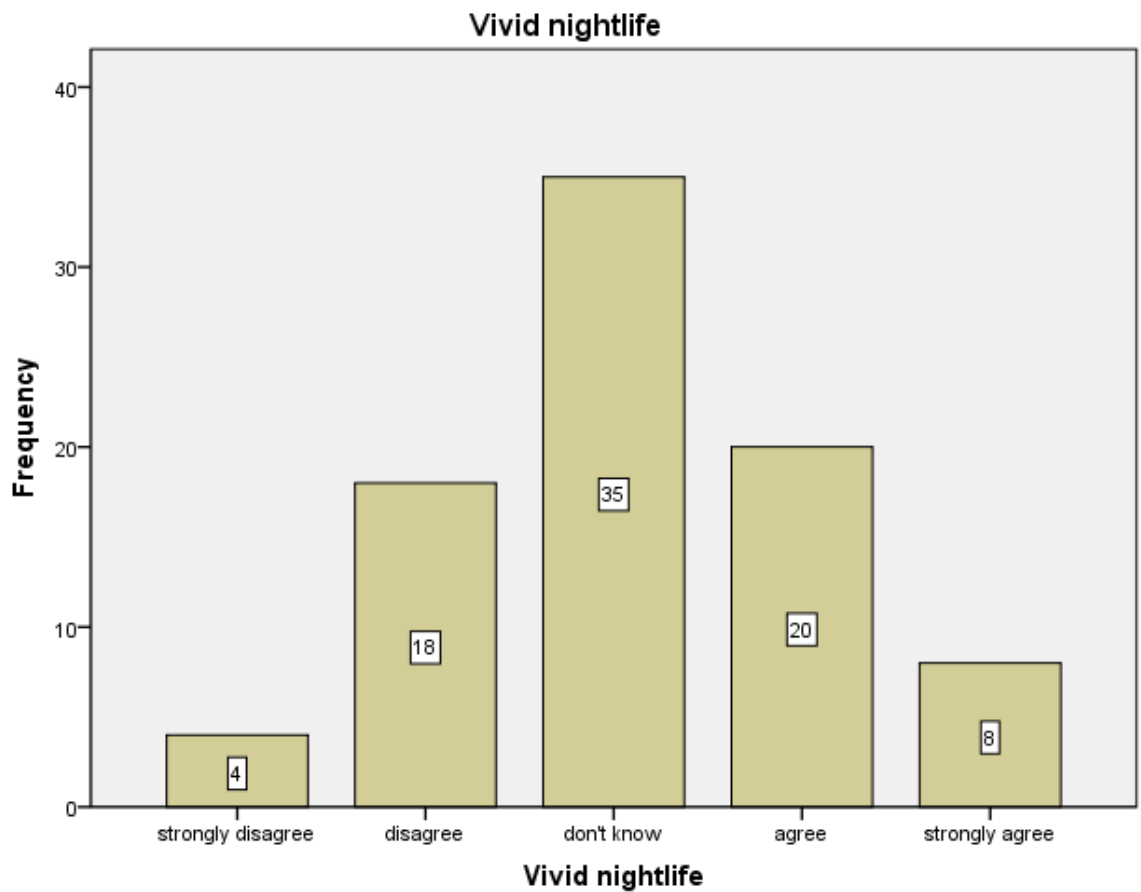


Figure 23. The opinions of the respondents about the statement “Helsinki has a vivid nightlife”

The opinions of the respondents about the statement “Helsinki has a vivid nightlife” are shown in Figure 23. As we can see on the chart below, the opinions of respondents are divided into three big groups. The majority of the respondents (35 people) has no idea about nightlife in Helsinki and marked their answer as “don’t know”. The second most popular answer was “agree”; 20 respondents agree with the statement. In conclusion there are 8 respondents strongly agreeing with the issue. The third most popular answer was “disagree”; 18 respondents have the opposite opinion. However, there are 4 respondents who strongly disagree that Helsinki has a vivid nightlife.

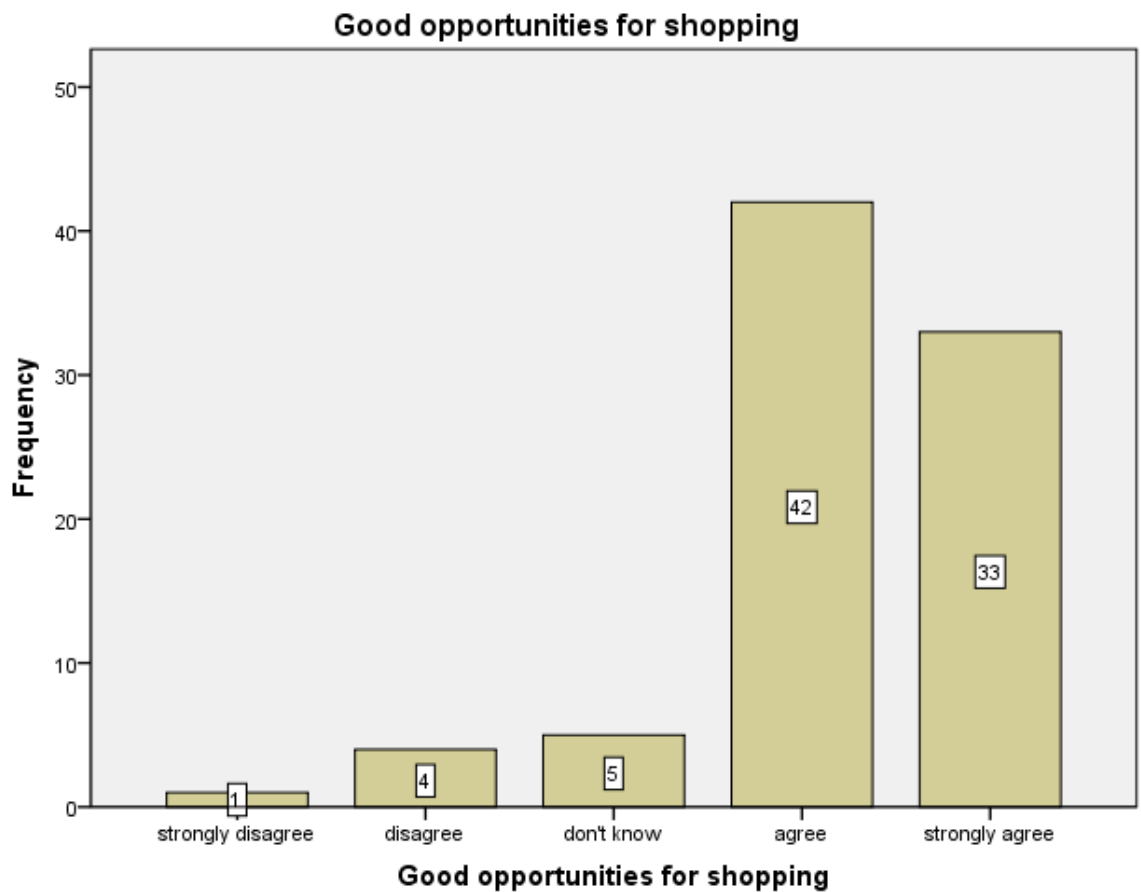


Figure 24. The opinions of the respondents about the statement “Helsinki has a lot of shopping opportunities”

The opinions of the respondents about the statement “Helsinki has a lot of shopping opportunities” are shown in the Figure 24. Overall, respondents have a pretty similar and unanimous opinion about the statement. The most popular answers are “agree” and “strongly agree”. 42 respondents agree and 33 strongly agree about the statement. Therefore, 75 respondents out of 85 believe that Helsinki has a lot of shopping opportunities. 5 respondents have no opinion about the issue and answered “don’t know”. Overall, 5 people disagree and strongly disagree.

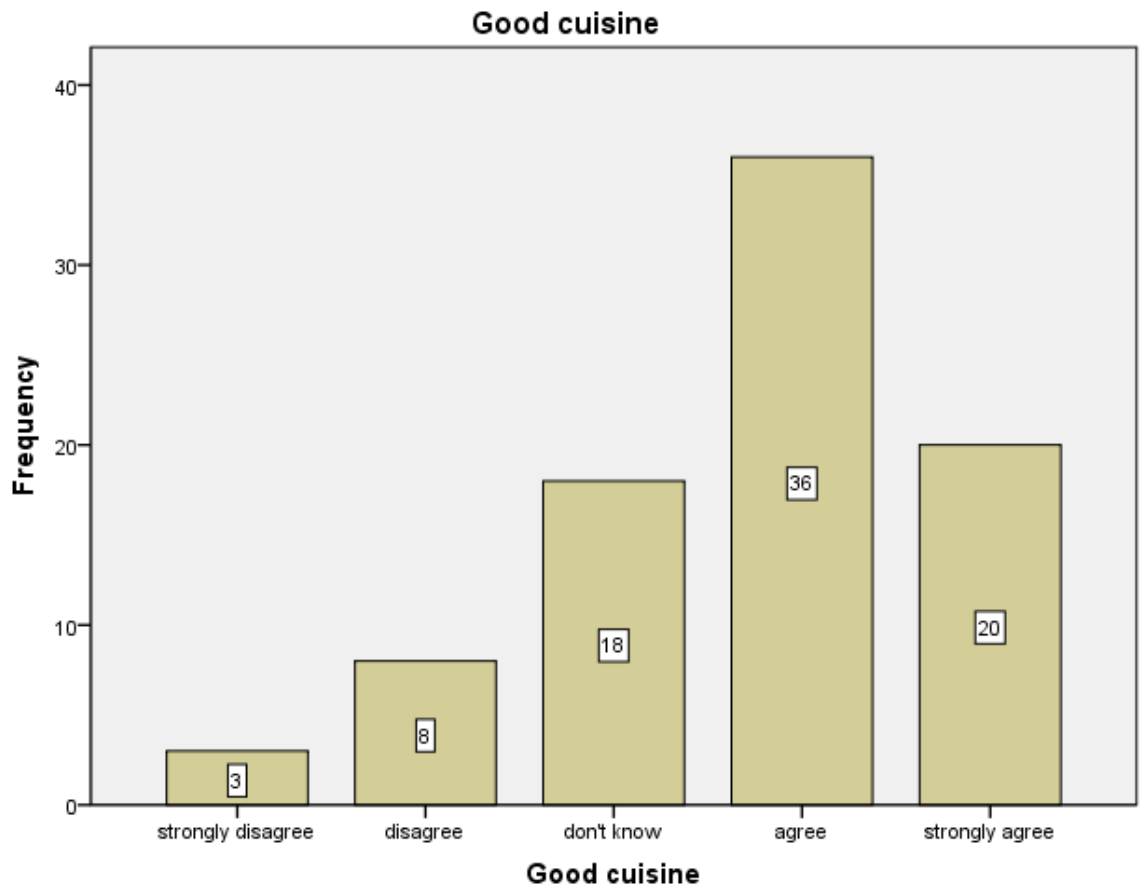


Figure 25. The opinions of the respondents about the statement “Helsinki provides good cuisine”

The Figure 25 shows the opinions of the respondents about the statement “Helsinki provides good cuisine”. The opinions of respondents are slightly divided. 36 respondents agree about the statement. 20 respondents answer “strongly agree”. Therefore, there are 56 respondents who agree with the statement about quality of cuisine. 18 respondents are indecisive and answered “don’t know”. 8 respondents disagree and 3 respondents strongly disagree.

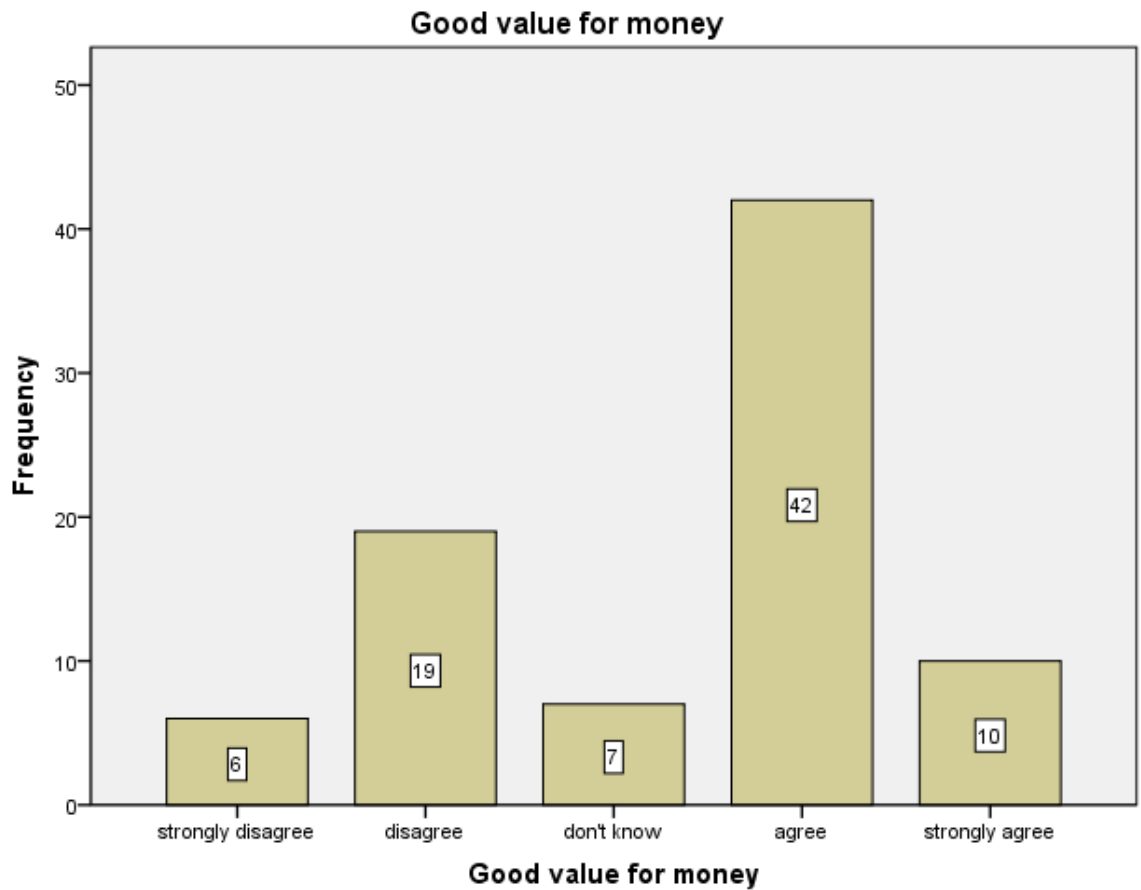


Figure 26. The opinions of the respondents about the statement “Helsinki is good value for money”

The opinions of the respondents about the statement “Helsinki is a good value for money” are shown in the Figure 26. Overall, the majority of the respondents (42 people) agree that Helsinki is good value for money. Moreover, 10 respondents agree with the statement. 7 respondents don’t have any certain opinion about the issue and answer “don’t know”. Besides, there is quite a big group of the respondent who disagree with the statement, thus showing that they have a different opinion. However, 6 respondents strongly disagree.

### 5.3 Open-ended questions

There are 3 open-ended questions which were mandatory to answer, excluding a few blank answers (dots or “none” answers). Here is a brief summary of the answers for open-ended questions. The complete list of answers is in the appendix 3.

There are 3 open-ended questions: “What do you know about Helsinki”, “What was the reason for visiting Helsinki”, and “What is your opinion about Helsinki”. The main purpose of these questions is to identify the level of awareness about Helsinki and opinion and the city’s perceptions of Russian tourists from St Petersburg. These questions will help the researcher get a deeper insight into the image of Helsinki.

*“What was the reason for visiting Helsinki”*: the analysis of this question you can find in the chapter 5.1 “Questionnaire results”, Figure 10.

*“What do you know about Helsinki”*: the main purpose of this question was to identify whether respondents are aware of Helsinki and its history. All the answers were translated into English language by the researcher (see Appendix 3). Some of respondents wrote their personal attitude and feelings about the city, instead of historical facts about Helsinki, for instance “strict, stylish, modest”, “modern, conceptual, hi-tech, comfortable, green, fun, and friendly”. Many respondents mentioned the quality of services and image attributes, such as cleanness, accommodations (hotel Scandic Marina was noted), weather condition etc. However, there are opinions which are fundamentally different. Some respondents think that Helsinki is quite a boring city; others are of the opinion that Helsinki is an interesting city.

Many respondents (35 people) mentioned that Helsinki is the capital of Finland; some of them mentioned that as the only fact they know, other declared additional information, such as the year when Helsinki became the capital of Finland and which city was the capital before. There are respondents who believe that Helsinki is the cultural and historical capital of Finland.

According to the collected answers, respondents named the following tourist attractions and sights: The National Museum of Finland, Kiasma, Suomenlinna, Helsinki Cathedral, Uspenskii Cathedral, Seurasaari, the monument of Sibelius, aqua part “Sere-na”. Some respondent only mentioned that there are a lot of museums, sightseeing places, interesting architecture, entertainment possibilities, and cultural events, such as concerts and exhibitions. Besides, 2 respondents noted that Helsinki is the World De-

sign Capital 2012. In addition, some respondents remember the most famous historical figures such as Sibelius and Mannerheim. However, a lot of respondents mentioned that there are many shops and great possibilities for shopping in Helsinki (Stockmann noted).

Overall, respondent have some general knowledge about Helsinki. Only 6 respondents out of the 85 participants in the survey wrote that they didn't know anything about Helsinki. Possibly, if respondents have had more time to think it over, they would have recalled some/more facts about Helsinki, especially historical ones.

“What do you think about Helsinki”: the main purpose of this question is to find out what Russian tourists from St Petersburg think about Helsinki, how they perceive Helsinki, and what their opinion is. A short summary of respondents' answers you can find in Figure 27. The full list of respondents' answers you can see in Appendix 4.

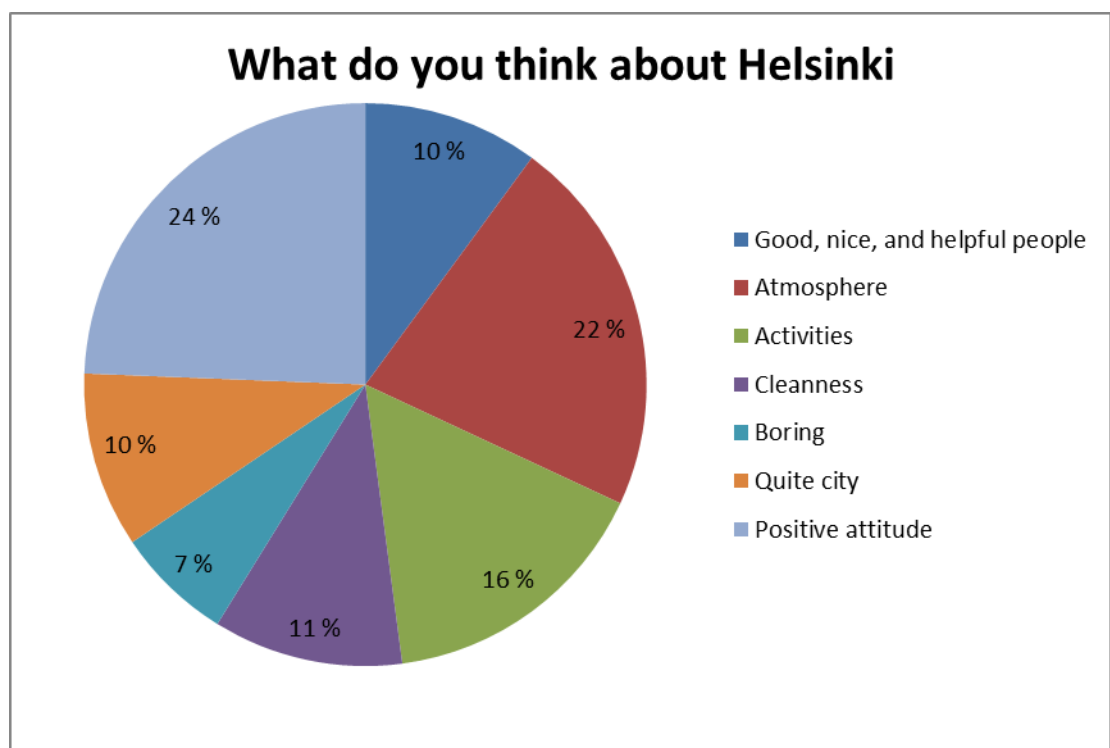


Figure 27. What do you think about Helsinki

The most popular responses for the respondents are presented in Figure 27. The result is presented as percentage, because a lot of people used the same attributes that expressed their feeling about Helsinki.

24% of the respondents have a positive attitude towards Helsinki. It means that they think about Helsinki in the positive way or used words “like” or “love”, for instance “I like Helsinki”, “it is the best city in Finland” etc.

22% of the respondents think that there is a very nice atmosphere in Helsinki. By “nice atmosphere” they meant that Helsinki is nice, cozy, beautiful, and peaceful. Some of the respondents wrote that they feel themselves very comfortable in Helsinki, for instance “feel myself comfortable here” and “this city became my second home”.

16% of the respondents think that there are lot of activities and things to do in Helsinki, for instance good opportunities for shopping and leisure. Besides, they like going for a walk around the city very much.

11% of the responses are about the high level of cleanness in Helsinki. Respondents admit that it is very clean everywhere.

10% of the respondents are of the opinion that Finnish people in Helsinki are very polite, friendly, and helpful. One of the respondents noted that there are a lot of Finns who speak very good English. Another wrote that she loves Scandinavian people.

7% of the respondents are of the opinion that Helsinki is a boring city. Several respondents mentioned that there are few sightseeing places and the shops close too early.

Some people's responses did not fit into either category and were very unique and one of the kind. The full list of respondents' answers is in the Appendix 4. Here are some examples of these responses, which the researcher found very interesting:

"Helsinki is a wonderful city with an interesting history and architecture. It has kept the heritage of its history, but you can also see new trends in it. I would say that Helsinki is a progressive city. Helsinki is home to many cultural and musical events. It is convenient to move around the city. "

“A city with modern architecture, free culture and fresh air”

“A pretty good town, though it seems relatively small for the capital. There are too many foreigners living in Helsinki.”

“A positive city, fresh air, easy access to any part of the city by public transport, friendly people, a lot of people speaking English”



“A European town, an interesting zoo, shops, clean, bad situation with parking, shops closed too early, never get bored, for sure will come back again”.

## 6 Conclusion

The findings of this research seem to suggest that Russian tourists from St Petersburg are well experienced in travelling. Since the majority of the respondents are employed, people usually travel 1-2 times per year. In addition, they prefer to travel abroad rather than inside Russia. More often they visit countries which belong to the European Union and warm countries, such as Turkey, Egypt, Greece etc. Therefore, the researcher concludes that respondents' judgements are reasonable enough and reliable.

The findings of this research seem to suggest that the image of Helsinki is positive among Russian tourists from St Petersburg. The majority of the respondents perceived the image of Helsinki as "positive" or "excellent". As it was already mentioned by the researcher, Russian tourists from St Petersburg have a realistic and well-established opinion and image of Helsinki, because people have been visiting Helsinki many times, since the distance between the cities is not big and rules for Finnish visa application are simplified for St Petersburg inhabitants. In addition, Russian tourists from St Petersburg think about Helsinki in a very positive way. They think that Helsinki is a nice, cozy city, clean, quiet but a little bit boring city. Thereby, the researcher thinks that it is an excellent result.

The findings of this research seem to suggest that Helsinki as a tourism destination is not very good advertised among travel agencies or social media, because the majority of people find out about Helsinki through friends and relatives. Nevertheless, a lot of people from St Petersburg have been to Finland many times. Basically, they travel to Finland in order to experience the city, to walk around the city, to do the shopping, and of course on leisure purposes.

The findings of this research seem to suggest that Russian tourists from St Petersburg don't know much about Helsinki as a city. In addition, they are not aware about the history of Helsinki and current events going on. The most common fact respondents mentioned is that Helsinki is the capital of Finland. The reason for that can be also a lack of time.

In addition, the respondents had rate the attributes of Helsinki's image to in appliance with their level of agreement. The findings show that:

- People agree that Helsinki is the city surrounded by sea.
- Overall, travellers from St Petersburg are not aware that Helsinki is the world design capital in 2012.
- The opinions about the architecture in Helsinki are divided almost in halves. It means that there is no clear answer for this issue.
- In general, respondents agree that Helsinki is a city full of events, but the difference between the number of the answers "agree" and "disagree" is not big.
- Tourists from St Petersburg strongly perceive Helsinki as a walkable city.
- Helsinki is an international city in the eyes of the respondents.
- There is no clear opinion whether the climate in Helsinki is pleasant or not.
- People have an opinion that Helsinki is a clean city. In addition, many respondents mentioned during the live interview that it is very clean in Helsinki.
- The majority of the respondents think that there are a lot of parks in Helsinki.
- Travellers share the same opinion that the public transportation in Helsinki is good.
- Basically, respondents agree about the statement "Helsinki is a safe city".
- People think that people in Helsinki are friendly and hospitable. Besides, it was mentioned many times in answers for the question "what do you think about Helsinki".
- In general, respondents think that people in Helsinki are tolerant.
- Basically, tourists from St Petersburg are not aware about nightlife in Helsinki. It means that they don't visit many night clubs and night events, such as concerts.
- Since one of the reasons to visit Helsinki is shopping, it is no wonder that respondents agree with the statement "Helsinki has a lot of shopping opportunities".
- Respondents agree that Helsinki is good value for money, because otherwise tourists wouldn't go to Helsinki for shopping or travel so often.

## **7 Recommendations for the further studies**

In the research only 85 people have participated, because the researcher had a limited time. Thus, a recommendation for further studies is to conduct a more comprehensive research with a larger number of respondents participating in it. Then the findings will be more reliable.

Another recommendation for the further studies is to make a qualitative research. It will help to get a deeper insight into the image of Helsinki in the eyes of Russian tourists from St Petersburg. In addition, qualitative research will help to answer the question “why do people have certain opinion about Helsinki and its image”

Since many people have already been to Helsinki many times, the number of tourists could reduce, because there is nothing new, what they haven't seen already. In a close future some new services should be started there, they will attract new tourists and the old ones, who have already been there.

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## Appendix 1 Questionnaire in English

1. Nationality:

☐ Russian

Age category:

☐ 15 to 24

☐ 25 to 39

☐ 40 to 55

☐ 56 to 69

☐ 70 or older

Gender:

☐ male

☐ female

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

2. How many times a year do you travel?

☐ 0

☐ 1-2

☐ 3-4

☐ more

Where do you travel?

☐ inside Russia

☐ abroad, where? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What do you know about Helsinki?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What is your image of Helsinki?

☐ excellent

☐ positive

☐ neutral

☐ negative

☐ totally negative

5. Where have you heard about Helsinki?

☐ on the news

☐ from the internet

☐ from a friend

☐ other, where? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Have you ever visited Helsinki?

☐ never

☐ 1 time

☐ several times

☐ many times

7. What was a purpose for going there?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. What do you think about Helsinki?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**9. Circle the alternative, which best describes your opinion about Helsinki.**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Helsinki is a city surrounded by sea.	1	2	3	4	5
Helsinki is a design city.	1	2	3	4	5
The architecture in Helsinki is interesting.	1	2	3	4	5
Helsinki is a city, full of events.	1	2	3	4	5
Helsinki is a walkable city.	1	2	3	4	5
Helsinki is an international city.	1	2	3	4	5
The climate in Helsinki is pleasant.	1	2	3	4	5
Helsinki is a clean city.	1	2	3	4	5
Helsinki has a lot of parks.	1	2	3	4	5
Helsinki has a good public transportation.	1	2	3	4	5
Helsinki is a safe city.	1	2	3	4	5
Helsinki has friendly and hospitable people.	1	2	3	4	5
Helsinki is a tolerant city.	1	2	3	4	5
Helsinki has a vivid nightlife.	1	2	3	4	5
Helsinki has a lot of shopping opportunities.	1	2	3	4	5
Helsinki provides good cuisine.	1	2	3	4	5
Helsinki is good value for money.	1	2	3	4	5

**Thank you for your answers!**

## **Appendix 2 List of countries in which Russian tourists from St Petersburg travelling**

USA, Finland

To the sea, in Europe

Germany, Finland, Greece

Europe, America

USA, Estonia, Finland

Germany, Italy

Egypt

Finland, Greece

Finland

Europe

Cuba, Estonia, Finland, Ukraine, Spain, Portugal, etc.

Prague Egypt Finland

Europe

Tallinn, Sweden

Europe

Europe

Finland

Europe

It depends

Finland, Norway

Europe

Finland, Bulgaria, Spain

Europe

Czech Republic, France, Finland, Sweden, Turkey, Cyprus

Finland

Spain, Germany, Finland, Sweden, Estonia

Finland

Europe, the southern countries

Finland, Estonia, Sweden, Ukraine

Europe  
Egypt, Europe  
Europe  
Europe  
Europe  
Europe and to the warm countries  
Spain, Germany, Finland  
Finland, Spain, Turkey, Tunisia  
Europe  
Finland  
Belarus, Baltic countries, Finland  
Finland  
Helsinki, Europe  
Asia  
Italy, Switzerland, Germany  
The nearby foreign countries  
Finland  
in Europe  
Finland, Poland  
Finland, Europe  
Finland, Europe  
Scandinavia, Egypt, Tunisia  
Dubai, Hong Kong, Nice, Cuba  
Finland, the country's warm  
in Europe  
Sweden, Finland  
Malta, Thailand, Finland  
in Europe  
Finland, Sweden, Estonia, Greece  
Finland, Sweden, Spain, Italy  
Finland, Spain, Italy, Sweden  
Finland, Sweden

Europe

Turkey, Finland, Israel, United Arab Emirates

Emirates, Israel, Finland

Finland, Italy, Turkey

Finland, to the warm countries

Finland, to the warm countries

Sweden, Italy, Norway, Turkey, Greece

In Europe, in Scandinavia

France, Switzerland, Finland

Italy, Turkey, Egypt

Finland, Greece, Spain, Sweden, Czech Republic

United States, to the Schengen countries

Finland, Italy, France

Finland, to the warm countries

Finland

Finland, to the warm countries

Finland

Finland, Italy, Turkey

### Appendix 3 What do you know about Finland?

A small, well-kept town, with its charming image and friendly people.

A small town with a clean environment, quiet people.

Capital of Finland.

Capital of Finland, a large city, clean, lots of different attractions, many Russian (recently), a lot of Goths.

modern, conceptual, hi-tech, comfortable, green, fun, friendly.

The capital of Finland. A lot of sales :) The interesting architecture.

Cathedral, Savonlinna.

It is a European city.

Windy, cozy, clean, a lot of friendly people, the multinational city.

Excellent public transportation, a good place for shopping for residents of the north-west Russia.

Is it a big city, the capital of Finland, this year's Helsinki - European Capital of Design, at night in Helsinki boring ((( Not interesting city ... not alive, but students in overalls rejoice. A lot of naked men and women (as well as in whole Scandinavia).

Beautiful country, beautiful city.

Beautiful, clean, quiet, peaceful.

The capital of Finland, there are shops, a small town "

Beautiful, alive city, a lot of people, many nationalities live there.

Nice, cozy.

Bad taste, too many foreigners, slowness.

Cathedral, funny bus terminal, strange people.

Beloved city with a cozy warm atmosphere and excellent service.

Cold, boring, quiet.

Quiet, cozy, and comfortable city.

Capital of Finland.

"Cold, Stockmann, fish"

Historical and cultural center of Finland, the port, the connection of history and modernity, interesting architectural solutions. Favourable city for living and active recreation. In the summer green and in winter is clean.

Helsinki is the capital of the world of design in 2012.

Cultural capital with a rich history, modern city with well-developed infrastructure, and friendly citizens.

Music, lots of shops.

Capital of Finland, on the Gulf coast, 300, 000 citizens.

The capital of Finland, the Red Orthodox Church in the rock.

Large-developed European city in southern Finland in the high-tech style.

"The capital of Finland, the most northern city in Europe ",

Capital of Finland, Mannerheim, Nikolai II, Kiasma.

Seurasaari, Suomenlinna, shops.

Capital of Finland.

The capital of Finland.

The capital of Finland.

The capital of Finland.

It is a beautiful city, parks, nature. + General facts from history

Strict, stylish, modest.

Vantaa airport, aqua park "Serena".

"Helsinki became a capital of Finland only in 1812, before the capital was Turku.

For a long time, there were wooden buildings in Helsinki; therefore during a large fire, the city was burned. There are many museums, some of them tourist could be visited free of charge, including the Helsinki City Museum. In 1952 in Helsinki hosted the Olympic Games. "

"Similar to the St. Petersburg, cozy, compact".

The ex-city of the Russian Empire. Calm and pleasant town"

Beautiful. In general has its own beauty.

The capital of Finland, the largest Nordic port.

Many things, was on excursion.

There are many attractions; and facts from the history about the city.

The capital of Finland, tasty fish and cloudberry jam.

The capital of Finland, one of the centres of cultural events, concerts, a place for "tourist shopping".

There is a soft drink Dr. Pepper.

Good hotels, water park "Serena".

I don't know about Helsinki much; Helsinki is the capital of Finland.

The capital of Finland, the oldest part of Helsinki is Senate Square.

Nothing.

Cultural Capital of Europe, the capital of rock music.

Capital of Finland since 1812, beautiful architecture, lots of attractions.

The capital of Finland, many museums, shops, entertainment.

nothing

The capital of Finland, an industrial port city, tourism, good ecology, cultural life (exhibitions, concerts ...)

Capital of Finland

Capital of Finland

The main city of Finland, there is a palace of the president in the city center. Uspensky Orthodox Cathedral is the main temple of the Finnish Orthodox Church, the Sibelius monument.

"Jean Sibelius, The church in the rock, Port, The Fortress ".

Nothing.

Nothing.

Nothing.

The capital of Finland.

The capital of Finland.

Nothing.

A great cultural center of Europe. beautiful architectural ensembles

The capital of Finland.

Capital of Finland.

A quiet and cozy town.

The capital of Finland

Mannerheim, Sibelius, the railway station, which looks the same as in Vyborg, tram 3T, Olympics Games.

gray, stony, strong, boring and quiet at night. I love the bay and like the hotel Scandic Marina.

Cold, calm, relaxing, comfortable, clean.



Excellent city.

The capital of Finland.

Finland's capital city, Senate Square, a huge white temple in the historic part of town.

There is a port.

The capital of Finland.

## Appendix 4 What do you think about Helsinki?

“very busy, yet not overcrowded city, with its own Nordic charm to it”

“quiet town”

“quiet, calm city”

“a positive city, fresh air, easy access to any part of the city by the public transport, friendly people, a lot of people speak English”

“Really nice, friendly, homy, convenient”

“Nice town with friendly people”

“Quiet City”

“Interesting, safe city”

“very beautiful, spacious city with a good atmosphere and nice people”

“a nice, clean city”

“Boring city ... could be more interesting and more alive ...”

“I would like to visit Helsinki more often”

“A beautiful city with well-groomed polite and nice people”

“nice city with beautiful streets”

“the best city in Finland”

“good city”

“Boring Town”

“nice, nice city”

“I love it”

.....

“the city quiet, with few attractions, but very green.”

“a suburb of St. Petersburg”

“this city became my second home”

“Clean, nice city, nice place, hospitable people”

“a nice town, but where everything is closed at 6 pm”

“A quiet, filled with the spirit of the northern city.”

“A pretty good town, though it seems relatively small for the capital. There live too many Russians.”

“A city with a touch of granite "severity" of architecture, which is very appealing to me with an interesting landscape, clean and comfortable. Very comfortable city.”

“Tremendous”

“Nothing.”

“modern city, quiet and cozy. Looks a bit like St. Petersburg”

“There are lot of opportunities in Helsinki!!”

“quite, beautiful city, but boring”

“Strict, but at the same time alive city”

“expensive, beautiful, it is not allowed to smoke, a lot of drunk youths”

“ all the old buildings were demolished for nothing”

“very interesting city and nice to walk around in Helsinki”

“I'll come again”

“think in a very positive way”

“European town, an interesting zoo, shops, clean, bad situation with parking, shops closed too early, never get bored, for sure will come back again”

“I feel myself comfortable here”

“an usual city, a European city”

"Helsinki is a wonderful city with an interesting history and architecture. He has kept the heritage of its history, but you also can see new trends in it. I would say that Helsinki is a progressive city. Helsinki is home to many cultural and musical events. It is convenient to move around the city. "

“a nice town”

“Everything there is fine.”

“Very beautiful and wonderful city”

“nice town”

“pleasant European city, clean”

“small, fairly clean, with cool suburbs, and many traffic lights. overcast city”

“a quiet city compare to the capitals of other countries”

“nice and cozy town. a little bit boring”

“a small, pleasant town. pleasant to walk through the historic center”

“like everything”

“like everything”

“an ordinary town, nothing stands out. Clean”  
 “Quiet, beautiful, clean city, where you can relax and spend time. a lot of good stores and good prices”  
 “Quiet, clean city, a bit boring”  
 “clean, cold”  
 “not a typical Finnish city, lively and interesting”  
 “a city with modern architecture, free culture and the fresh air”  
 a beautiful city, the inhabitants of the cultural  
 “modern, provincial, quiet and cozy town”  
 “European city, few sightseeing places, friendly people, good service”  
 “European, modern city, boring”  
 “a nice quiet town”  
 “Sunny neutral city”  
 “I like the city, cheerful and sympathetic people”  
 “I like”  
 “friendly people, clean city, easy to get everywhere by car”  
 “easy to get everywhere by car, a beautiful city. clean”  
 “a quiet, calm European city”  
 “a quiet, peaceful town, a bit boring”  
 “I feel myself comfortable and free in Helsinki”  
 “an excellent city for leisure and shopping. hospitable and tolerant people.”  
 “interesting city”  
 “Comfortable, clean, boring, expensive, monotonous, and cultural.”  
 “a nice clean city”  
 “A quiet, inconspicuous, narrow-minded, small-town”  
 “I do not like it”  
 “Excellent city, there is always something to do”  
 “A good city for leisure and shopping, I love Scandinavians”  
 “nice city, clean”  
 “a beautiful city, lots of interesting things, beautiful architecture”  
 “a good city, the Finns are friendly people”